

 Havering LONDON BOROUGH	Strategic Planning Committee 4 July 2018
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Pre-Application Reference:	PE/00492/18
Location:	WATERLOO ESTATE, ROMFORD
Ward:	ROMFORD TOWN
Description:	Comprehensive redevelopment of the site comprising the demolition of existing buildings and construction of a residential-led mixed-use development to provide residential and commercial floorspace as well new public realm
Case Officer:	PAUL ROBERTS

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This proposed development is being presented to enable Members of the committee to view it before a planning application is submitted and to comment upon it. The development does not constitute an application for planning permission and any comments made upon it are provisional and subject to full consideration of any subsequent application and the comments received as a result of consultation, publicity and notification.
- 1.2 The proposal under consideration forms part of the Council's major regeneration and development programme of the Council's own land to deliver around 3,000 new homes over the next 10 years. The majority of the homes will be delivered through the redevelopment of 12 estates across the borough in conjunction with Wates, the Council's chosen development partner. The Waterloo Estates is one of the first three estates to come forward.
- 1.3 Wates were chosen as a bid partner following a competition process which ran throughout 2017. During this process the Council commissioned capacity studies and also set parameters for the general form and layout of the redevelopment to take place. This fed into the Waterloo Estate scheme first presented to Planning for initial pre-application discussions, which began in February 2018. To date three informal

meetings have taken place with the focus primarily on layout with Officers emphasising the need for quality streets, external amenity space and the importance of enhancing the relationship with neighbouring development, notably links with the town centre. The current iteration of the proposal has been developed in line with the advice officers have given. Further discussion on the specifics of the design approach will follow in the coming months.

2 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposal

2.1 The proposal is to demolish all existing buildings on the site and construct a residential led development currently comprising the following:

- In excess of 1,400 homes;
- Indicative Housing Mix: 43% 1 bed apartments,
46% 2 bed apartments,
11% 3 bed apartments.
- A total of 38% of Affordable Housing
- Community Space for Estate and St Andrews Parish Church;
- Commercial Space on Waterloo Road frontage
- Commercial/retail floorspace (1,328 sqm)
- Public Open Space;
- New partly pedestrianised urban boulevard along St. Andrews Road;
- Improved cycle links within and adjacent to the site
- Enhanced ecological corridor to south of site;
- Landscaping and new tree planting around blocks;
- Enhanced pedestrian connection to the town centre;
- Between 0.25 and 0.4 parking ratio proposed on-street and in podium blocks.

As presently proposed, the residential units will be contained within blocks of up to 20 storeys along Waterloo Road, tapering down to 3 storeys at the western edge of the site backing onto existing terraced housing. For the most part the existing road pattern will be retained and the sole vehicular access will be off London Road to the north of the site.

Site and Surroundings

2.2 The site consists of a post war housing estate covering an area of approximately 4.5 hectares set off Waterloo Road at the western edge of Romford Town Centre. The estate currently consists of 287 residential units in buildings ranging from 2 storey houses to 11 storey towers. At present, 224 of the existing units are affordable. In addition to residential uses there is a public house on the estate.

The site is bounded by 2 storey semi-detached housing to the west, 2-4 storey commercial buildings to the north and the A125 dual carriageway to the east. On the opposite side of the A125 is the prominent flank elevation of the Brewery retail development and associated car park. To the south is a railway embankment designated in the Council's Local Plan as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) of Borough Importance. There are 2 Grade II listed buildings adjacent to the site: St Andrew's church located at the western edge of the site and Salem's Chapel lies to the north on London Road facing onto Cottons Park. The land adjacent to the railway is within an Archaeological Priority Area. Romford train station is within walking distance and there are a number of bus routes on Waterloo Road and London Road. The Public Transport Accessibility (PTAL) score for the site ranges from 2-6a, the more accessible part (6a) fronting Waterloo Road with the rest of this ranging from 2 to 3.

Planning History

2.3 None relevant to this proposal

3 CONSULTATION

3.1 At this stage, it is intended that the following will be consulted regarding any subsequent planning application:

- Thames Water
- Network Rail (Statutory Consultee)
- Environment Agency
- Greater London Authority (Statutory Consultee)
- Havering PCT
- Fire Brigade
- National Grid – Gas/Electricity
- Historic England (Statutory Consultee)
- Transport for London (Statutory Consultee)
- Natural England
- National Air Traffic Services

The following consultees have commented as part of the pre-application process:

3.2 None to date.

4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1 In accordance with planning legislation, the developer has begun to consultation with the local community on these proposals as part of the pre-application process.

5 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the committee must consider are:

- Principle of development
- Density, Scale and Site Layout
- Parking and Highway Issues
- Housing Mix/Affordable Housing
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

5.2 Principle of development

In seeking to meet the minimum supply of new homes, Policy CP1 of the LDF supports the increase in the supply of housing in existing urban areas where development is sustainable, promoting mixed use development in town centres and enabling high density in Romford. One of the key principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is that planning should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. Paragraphs 50 and 52 from the document seek to provide opportunities for achieving sustainable development, delivering a wide choice of high quality homes, widening opportunities for home ownership and creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

Policy CP1 expresses the need for a minimum of 535 new homes to be built in Havering each year through prioritising the development of brownfield land and ensuring it is used efficiently. The London Plan supersedes the above target and increases it to a minimum ten-year target for Havering (2015-2025) of 11,701 new homes or 1,170 new homes each year. The proposal for an additional circa 1,100+ units would be equivalent to 10% of the ten year target and the principle of the development is therefore supported as it would make an important contribution to meeting Havering's housing needs.

The commercial/retail floorspace along the Waterloo Road frontage proposed is broadly welcomed as it will serve to activate street frontages and provide facilities for the benefits of future residents. The scale of any retail would be limited so that it would not undermine the vitality and viability of Romford town centre. The re-provision and improvement of existing community facilities will

is in accordance with policy. Ease of access to such spaces for local residents will be expected.

5.3 Density, Site Layout and Scale

London Plan Policy 3.4 requires development to optimise housing output for different locations taking account of local context and character, design principles and public transport capacity.

At 1400 units the proposal would create a density equivalent to 311 units per hectare. The eastern edge of the site benefits from a high PTAL score of 6a where such a density range is judged to be potentially acceptable, however, the rest of the site is less accessible falling between 2 & 3 PTAL where the density range envisaged by the London Plan is between 45 and 170 units per hectare. The higher density as it applies to a good proportion of the site need not, in itself, constitute a reason for refusal provided the amount of development being proposed is appropriate to the location. Whilst providing a guide to realising the potential of sites, density should not be applied mechanistically and should take into account factors such as local context, design, transport capacity and social infrastructure. The draft London Plan has deleted the density matrix favouring an approach which requires development to make the most efficient use of land and be developed at the optimum density based on a design-led approach to determine site capacity. The draft Plan also notes that decisions in respect of density should have regard to the future provision of planned infrastructure, for instance in this case the forthcoming Crossrail service at Romford Station.

The pre-application discussions to date on this scheme have been design-led and have focussed primarily on layout and the relationship Waterloo Estate has with the town centre. Portal / slab blocks which originally formed a 'wall' onto Waterloo Road have been replaced with courtyard blocks with podiums, improving links with the town centre and creating further car parking within the blocks and away from the streets. A new public space has been moved from the south side of St Andrews Rd to the north and will both benefit from improved sunlight but also have an improved aspect to the listed church, a key focal point of the proposal. In addition, the road layout which previously brought cars into the site via circular routes has been amended so that there is a more defined street hierarchy, also turning St Andrews Road into a pedestrian, cycle and emergency vehicle only space with associated green space and landscaping. This will hopefully lead to the creation of quality public realm and a welcome ground level experience for all users and encourage increased on and off-site walking/commuting to the town centre/station and Cottons Park.

Details pertaining to internal amenity, daylight/sunlight, children's playspace; security by design plus external private and communal amenity will be addressed as the scheme evolves.

Layout April 2018





Policy DC 61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document states that planning permission will only be granted for development which maintains, enhances or improves the character and appearance of the local area. Policy DC66 states that buildings or structures of 6 storeys or greater will normally only be granted in Romford Town Centre and should be of exemplary high quality and inclusive design. This site lies just south and west of the town centre as referred to in the Romford Area Action Plan and as such is not one where there is a policy expectation of tall buildings. That said, the existing Waterloo Estate has two eleven storey buildings on site amidst the 3 and 4 storey blocks that predominate, hence some height in excess of the general policy presumption for this location already exists.

Regeneration on this scale offers the opportunity to establish a new townscape for this part of Romford that will not only assist in placemaking and

legibility but will support the delivery of new affordable housing. The proximity of the site to the town centre and Romford Station creates opportunities for a reassessment of prevailing and anticipated future building heights, densities and uses. The site is located east of the busy ring road and the Brewery development which is approximately 9 storeys tall and also sits north of the railway embankment which itself is over two storeys above ground floor levels. Accordingly, there is potential for a scheme in accordance with existing and future development at this edge of centre site with buildings of a greater scale than found currently, particularly on the southern and eastern edges built form would sit against relatively harsh environments and help to screen noise and disturbance to residents north and west from vehicles and trains. The consideration of storey heights is on going and detailed work on visual and environmental impact has to take place but in principle the approach taken, more height along Waterloo Road/Railway embankment and a reduction towards existing residential to the west is appropriate. Due to the scale of the site and distance to existing occupiers, the impact of building height will relate to the quality of the environment internally, not outside. All tall buildings would be expected to be of exemplary high quality.

There are 2 Grade II listed buildings adjacent to the site: St Andrew's Church at the western edge of the site and Salem's Chapel to the north on London Road, facing Cottons Park. The improved setting of the former is a key component of this proposal with the layout designed to afford the building sufficient space and improved visibility. The proposed public space and community facility adjacent to the Church will further enhance its setting and better reveal its significance. Further work on the impact of the new development to the listed buildings will be required as the scheme progresses.

5.4 Parking and Highway Issues

Policy CP9, CP10 and DC32 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD requires proposals for new development to assess their impact on the functioning of the road hierarchy. The overriding objective is to encourage sustainable travel and reduce reliance on cars by improving public transport, prioritising the needs of cyclists and pedestrians and managing car parking. A Transport Assessment will be required to be submitted with the planning application to demonstrate that the proposal would not contribute to additional traffic congestion in the vicinity of the site.

The Council Highways Officer has been involved in early discussions on the proposed layout and has offered support in principle to the car free zone along St. Andrews Road. Details on how this will function have yet to be assessed alongside the specifics of the internal road layout. In terms of car

parking provision, in the order of 0.32 parking spaces to dwellings are currently proposed either on-street or in the podiums. This would be in accordance with the London Plan where a maximum of 1 space per unit would be expected but would fall short of the minimum .5 space per unit proposed in the Consultation Draft of the Local Plan which was informed by the Council's Residential Car Parking Standards. In order to off-set the shortfall it is expected that parking in the estate would be subject to restriction and limited opportunities for the smaller units to have access to on-street parking permits. In addition car club parking is proposed which should also assist relieving car parking pressure.

The emphasis placed on cycle and pedestrian usability within the layout will serve to encourage people to use methods of transport other than the car. Likewise any improved links with the town centre and Romford train station will further encourage non-car use. Negotiations on that are on-going.

5.5 Housing Mix/Affordable Housing

Policy DC6 of the LDF and Policies 3.11 and 3.12 of the London Plan seek to maximise affordable housing in major development proposals and Policy DC2 has the objective of delivering 50% of new homes across the Borough. The Mayor of London Supplementary Planning Guidance "Homes for Londoners" (2017) sets out that where developments propose 35% or more of the development to be affordable at an agreed tenure split, then the viability of the development need not be tested, this is known as the "Fast Track Route". However, where the land is in public ownership the SPG recognises that a greater contribution to affordable housing should be made and proposals should deliver 50% affordable housing in order to qualify. Although the detail has yet to be discussed the scheme is expected at present to deliver 38% affordable units, to include 237 affordable rent units and 327 intermediate homes. The split of units is not in keeping with current Havering and London Plan policy which are seeking ratios of 70:30 and 60:40 between social housing and intermediate forms respectively. The applicant has indicated that the mix of affordable housing on this site has been established in the interests of preparing viable and deliverable proposals across all Estate regeneration sites. In that respect, it is likely that the viability assessment will be linked to the two other housing estate proposals (Napier and New Plymouth and Solar, Serena and Sunrise) which will come forward before the end of 2018. This approach is in principle supported as it will provide a fuller picture on the delivery of the development programme. Further work is required and the quantum and mix of affordable housing will be subject to detailed viability discussions before any planning submission. In terms of re-provision of existing units in order to comply with the draft London Plan estate

regeneration projects must replace homes which are based on social rent levels on a like-for-like level, and this would be expected here.

As regards mix, some 89% of the units are proposed to be either 1 or 2 bed, which is some way short of the preferred Havering Council mix which seeks a higher proportion of 3+ family sized units. Regard is however made to the edge of town centre location where against Waterloo Road and the railway embankment in particular, non-family units are considered to be more appropriate. Moreover, the mix is also informed by viability considerations with unit sizes maximising the deliverability of this and the other estate regeneration sites. Further work on this is required, although the applicant is aware that the quality of the family sized units that do come forward is paramount.

5.7 Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The most sensitive location in terms of neighbouring residential impact is along the western boundary of the site where the proposal backs onto two storey residential housing. Officers have emphasised the importance of safeguarding neighbouring amenity in terms of outlook, access to light and privacy. The applicant has taken on board those comments, although further assessment will be required once residential layout and orientation has been established.

5.8 Additional Issues

A number of other matters have yet to be addressed in the pre-application process but will be fundamental to the success of the scheme as it develops in form and layout. These include the following (list not in order of priority or exclusive):

- Residential Quality
- Sustainability, energy efficiency and climate change mitigation
- Impact on local Education provision
- Environmental Impacts
- Archaeology
- Biodiversity
- Flooding and Drainage
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Healthcare
- Open Space and Recreation

In all respects the Waterloo Estate regeneration scheme will be expected to achieve the highest quality of development both internally and externally and pay full regard to planning policy requirements. The Committee will have the opportunity to review some of the elements when the applicant returns to present a more developed proposal at a second pre-application meeting.

Financial and Other Mitigation

- 5.9 The proposal would likely attract a range of section 106 contributions to mitigate the impact of the development. This will be matter for further discussion as the proposal evolves.
- 5.10 The Council is undertaking work to put a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in place to mitigate the impact of development in the borough by contributing to the cost of Infrastructure necessary to support such development. This development would attract CIL contributions if an implementable consent is in place after the CIL is in place. This will be determined by the final quantum of development.

Other Planning Issues

- 5.11 The proposal will come forward as a 'hybrid' planning application with some of the details proposed to be assessed in full whilst a large section of the site will be submitted in 'outline' form. This a common approach to large schemes enabling the delivery of a first phase of development whilst subsequent phases are progressed as applications (Reserved Matters) in tandem with construction on the first phase. At present 3 phases are likely. The Council will have to establish the parameters for the later applications covering matters such as deign, vehicle access, public realm and heights. These matters are yet to be discussed.

Conclusions

- 5.12 The development is still in the pre-application stage and additional work remains to be carried however, this presentation will provide Members with an early opportunity to review and offer opinion on the direction of travel.