

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Main Road, Romford RM1 3BD
28 August 2025 (7.00 - 8.15 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group Ray Best and Timothy Ryan

**Havering Residents’
Group** Reg Whitney (Chairman), Robby Misir (Vice-Chair) and
John Crowder

Labour Group Jane Keane

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

30 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

31 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32 P1765.23 - LAND AT BRIDGE CLOSE, ROMFORD

The report before the Committee sought planning permission for an hybrid planning application where permission is sought in full for part of the site referred to as Phase I and in outline for the remainder.

The proposal aligns with the aims of the Romford Strategic Development Area and the Romford Area Action Plan, supporting the delivery of up to 1,070 new homes, including 35% affordable housing by habitable rooms. The development adopts a masterplan-led approach that integrates residential, commercial, educational, and community uses, with a strong emphasis on place-making, connectivity, and sustainability. The scheme includes a new primary school and nursery, flexible community and health spaces, and significant public realm improvements such as a civic square, riverside walkway, and a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Rom.

The design quality is a major factor in the recommendation, with 84% of habitable rooms in Plot A meeting or exceeding BRE daylight standards and 90% of homes designed to be accessible. The proposal also includes a robust flood risk and drainage strategy, biodiversity enhancements, and a commitment to sustainable transport through a largely car-free layout and improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. The development is considered to be in accordance with local and London Plan policies, and while some impacts on neighbouring daylight are acknowledged, these are considered to be outweighed by the significant public benefits of the scheme, including regeneration, housing delivery, and improved infrastructure. Existing community/infrastructure uses on the site that benefit from a permanent lawful use are safeguarded through either reprovision as part of the development or retention of site until alternate provision is available.

The proposal has adopted a masterplan approach for the proposed development at Bridge Close. The masterplan approach:

- aims to develop a robust, legible urban quarter that integrates well with its surroundings, fostering a sense of place and community.
- emphasises a mixture of uses, including residential, commercial, and community facilities, to support a the local economy and provide quality of life for future residents.
- seeks to reveal and incorporate historical landscape elements, such as the River Rom, by introducing public spaces.
- focuses on improving pedestrian and cycling connections, creating a network that enhances accessibility and mobility throughout the area, ultimately reducing reliance on cars.
- allows for phasing and future modifications, acknowledging the dynamic nature of urban development and ensuring the project's long-term viability.

In accordance with the public speaking arrangements, the Committee was addressed by an objector with a response by the applicant's agent.

With its agreement, Councillor Judith Holt and Councillor David Taylor addressed the Committee and raised concerns about overshadowing of some of the proposed blocks and a facility for place of worship for the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre. It was stated that while alternative locations have been proposed, none have been confirmed in writing, and there does not appear to be any legally binding commitment to securing a new site for the Centre.

Following the debate, the Committee **RESOLVED** to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to conditions and legal obligations set out in the report.

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2025**

The voting was three votes in favour and three votes against. The application was passed on the Chair's casting vote.

Councillors Ray Best, Jane Keane and Tim Ryan voted against the proposal.

Councillors Reg Whitney, Robby Misir and John Crowder voted in support of the proposal.

Chairman