



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

**Strategic Planning  
Committee – Developer  
Presentation  
9 December 2020**

**Pre-Application Reference:**

**PE/01081/19**

**Location:**

**FORMER ICE RINK SITE, ROM VALLEY  
WAY, ROMFORD.**

**Ward:**

**ROMFORD TOWN**

**Description:**

**HYBRID PLANNING APPLICATION FOR  
THE MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT  
COMPRISING 7 BLOCKS OF 1 TO 12  
STOREYS OF UPTO 1,050 UNITS (USE  
CLASS C3); 1,131SQ.M RETAIL AND  
CAFÉ (USE CLASS E (A & B)); 760SQ.M  
GYMNASIUM (USE CLASS E (d));  
3,000SQ.M HEALTH CENTRE (USE  
CLASS E (e & I)); 170SQ.M  
NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE FOR  
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND 170SQ.M  
ENERGY CENTRE (SUI-GENERIS) WITH  
ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, PARKING,  
BINS AND CYCLE STORE.**

**Case Officer:**

**Raphael Adenegan**

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## **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 redevelopment of the majority of the former Rom Valley Ice Rink site was granted planning permission in August 2018 under reference P1389.17 by

Regulatory Services Committee. Permission was granted for redevelopment of the site to provide 620 Residential units (use class C3) and 830sqm commercial floorspace (use class A1/A3/D1) in buildings extending to between 4 and 8 storeys in height together with associated car and cycle parking, hard and soft landscaping and infrastructure works.

- 1.3 The proposed planning application has been the subject of pre-application meetings with Officers. There have been five pre-application meetings including three workshops with officers and the scheme has evolved over the months. These proposals were presented to the Councils' Quality Review Panel on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Also, a pre-application meeting with the Greater London Authority (GLA) took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Pre-application discussions with the applicants have included the principle of the development proposed including quantum of development, massing, height layout, access and landscaping planning that have been undertaken by the applicants subject to a masterplan being developed for the site. The proposals are being brought to Committee at this stage.

## **2 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS**

### **2.1 Proposal**

Hybrid (part detailed / part outline) planning application for a mixed-use development of the site comprising:

- Full detailed application: for a total 154 apartments (104 affordable units and 50 market sale);
- 481sq.m retail space;
- 299sq.m restaurant/café space;
- 156sqm, neighbourhood centre space;
- 158sq.m energy centre space and;
- 504sq.m car park space (Block A).
  
- Outline Part (with only access for consideration other matters reserved) application of 6 apartment blocks of up to 896 residential units including key worker accommodation reserved by request for the NHS. 248 units are expected to be later living, with care, extra care, communal facilities, including dining room, library, pool, hydrotherapy pool and physiotherapy and a meeting or 'village hall' for social and craft activities, dance and yoga.
- 3,000sq.m medical facilities comprising clinician and outpatient;
- 421sq.m of flexible retail and café space;
- 760sq.m of Gym for residents and NHS staff only
- 14sq.m Neighbourhood Centre for community activities, with residents and NHS co-working space;
- 12sq.m Energy Centre;

- 9,826sq.m publicly accessible linear central park and activity area, central main avenue, a plaza landscaped frontage onto Rom Valley Way that allow for future cycle paths;
  - 5,230 m2 private ground floor and podia gardens;
  - Associated landscaping, parking spaces (up to 215 space including car cub) refuse and cycle stores with only access for consideration.
  - Vehicle access would be as existing from Rom Valley Way
- 2.2 The proposed pre-application enquiry subject to review is hybrid application. The information provided as part of this enquiry includes indicative quantum, layout and public open space areas.
- 2.3 The key objective stated by the applicant will be to create high quality buildings and places, which helps boost the supply of homes, including affordable homes.

### **Site and Surroundings**

- 2.6 The application site is rectangular in shape with a site area of approximately 2.9ha (29,000m<sup>2</sup>). The site has been vacant since the former Ice Rink on the northern half of the site (single storey building at 3300m<sup>2</sup>) was demolished. The site is now largely hard-surfaced with some grassland and some trees/shrubs around its perimeter, and is relatively level (slight gradient from north-west to south-east).
- 2.7 In terms of its local context, the application site lies southeast of Rom Valley Way (A125) dual carriageway which forms part of the Strategic Road Network ("SRN"). The application site is bound to the north by a public car park and to its west by Oldchurch Rise and Queen's Hospital. The southern boundary of the site lies adjacent to the hospital site access, also the main vehicular access point.
- 2.8 The surrounding buildings/uses are varied, a mix of residential, community, retail and small scale industrial uses surround the site. To the east of the site beyond Rom Valley Way lies a substantial retail park, residential dwellings and a small amount of industrial uses lie further to the north and a substantial residential area is located beyond this further north of Oldchurch Road. Beyond the hospital further south lies more large areas of residential development.

### **Planning History**

- 2.9 The following planning decisions are relevant to the application:

P1389.17 for 'Comprehensive redevelopment of the site to deliver a residential-led mixed use scheme. The proposal seeks to erect nine apartment blocks that range between four to eight storeys in height to contain a total of 620 residential apartments and two residents' gyms with ground floor commercial units,

together with associated landscaping, car and cycle parking'. Application approved on 22.08.2018 with s106 agreement.

P0732.13 for 'Change of Use of existing ice rink car park to a public pay & display'. Application approved on 23.07.2013 for temporary period which expired on 31.12.2015.

P1468.12 for 'Proposed food store within Class A1 (retail) use, petrol filling station, associated parking and landscaping, alterations to existing access to Rom Valley Way and formation of new access/egress on to Rom Valley Way; and outline planning application for a residential scheme of up to 71 units comprising a mix of 3 bedroom town houses and two blocks of 1 and 2 bed flats (access only to be considered)'. Application approved on 18.12.2013, permission now lapsed.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

3.1 As with pre-application discussions no consultation with third parties has occurred, as mentioned earlier the only other parties involved to date have been the GLA and the QRP Panel. It is intended that the following will be consulted regarding any subsequent planning application:

- Greater London Authority (Statutory Consultee)
- Transport for London (Statutory Consultee)
- Environment Agency
- Historic England -Archaeology
- Thames Water
- Essex and Suffolk Water
- EDF Energy
- National Grid/Cadent – Gas
- LFEPA – Water
- Fire Brigade
- Natural England
- Essex Wildlife
- CCG/NHS
- Metropolitan Police – Design Out Crime

### **4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

4.1 In accordance with planning legislation, the developer will consult the local community on these proposals as part of the pre-application process

## **Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018

London Plan 2016

Intend to Publish London Plan 2019)

London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies  
DPD 2008

Romford Area Action Plan DPD 2008

London Borough of Havering Proposed Submission Local Plan 2016 – 2031  
Emerging Romford Master Plan

## **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
- Quality of Design/Living Conditions for Future Occupiers
- Parking/Traffic
- Housing mix/affordable housing
- Quality Review Panel (QRP) Comments
- Other issues

### **5.2 Principle of Development**

- This is a brownfield site outside Romford Town Centre but within the Strategic Development Area boundary. The principle of residential development has been established by the extant planning permission for the redevelopment of the site to create 620 units. At all levels of planning policy, including the emerging Local Plan there is strong encouragement to maximise the use of such sites when they become available. Bringing forward this type of site that could be delivered in the short and long term will support the Council in meeting its housing requirement.
- The proposal is sited on land formerly referred to as Romford Ice Rink, therefore Policy SSA7 on 'Romford Ice Rink' from LBH's '*Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document*' 2008 becomes a material policy consideration. The policy, outlines that mixed use development comprising residential, leisure and retail facilities will be acceptable.
- The Council's Proposed Modifications following the submission of the Local Plan state that Romford has potential for significant regeneration and intensification, and national, London Plan and local policies seek to

optimise the use of brownfield land for meeting the demand for new homes, and other growth.

- It should be noted that majority of the proposal is outline as illustrated in paragraph 2.

### **5.3 Density, scale and site layout**

- The proposed density would exceed the ranges identified in the current London Plan and the adopted Local Development Framework. The emerging London Plan suggests moving away from the density matrix approach however, and in any case, density is only one indication of the appropriateness of a proposed development. What would be important in assessing such a high density proposal is whether it delivers sufficient quality of design and provides a high quality living environment for future occupiers.
- At 4-12 storeys, the buildings will be taller than any of its direct neighbours as existing including Queen's Hospital, Image Court and Blade Court both on Old Church Road. Buildings of the height proposed, ranging from 4 to 12 storeys, could be considered appropriate in this context depending on the distribution/bulk of the taller elements and overall character created. Given the density/height, there may be concerns over quality and liveability of accommodation, proximity of the buildings to the boundaries of adjacent sites in terms of amenity impact and/or prejudicing development of surrounding land. Any height and bulk should be justified through a thorough townscape and contextual approach including identifying important viewpoints, in accordance with Policy DC61 of the LDF and policies HC3 and HC4 of the emerging Local Plan. Members may wish to comment on this part of the proposal.

### **5.4 Quality of Design/Living Conditions for Future Occupiers**

- There is merit in an approach as demonstrated which gives high priority to the quality of materials and which can demonstrate a coherent design led approach to the redevelopment of the site.
- It is important that any proposal provides high quality accommodation for future residents including provision of outdoor amenity space, avoiding single aspect dwellings and satisfactory outlook from habitable rooms.
- Consideration is required as to the quality of pedestrian environment, particularly from along Rom Valley Way, link to the hospital and proposed

liveable neighbourhood improvement scheme to the Town Centre, and within the central area of the site.

## 5.5 Parking/Traffic

- It is not anticipated that the proposals will generate significant levels of traffic. There would likely be a requirement to provide disabled parking, but given the edge of town centre location, providing additional residential parking spaces may not be required. 215 parking spaces are proposed for residential and businesses.
- Given the quantum and the uses proposed and the nature of the site, providing the necessary parking and satisfactory servicing may be a challenge and Members may wish to comment on this.

## 5.6 Housing mix/affordable housing

- Current planning policy would require that 35% affordable housing (of which 70% should be social rented and 30% intermediate/shared ownership) is proposed or it should be comprehensively demonstrated that the maximum viable quantum is being provided.
- The proposed scheme indicates approximately 30% - 35% affordable housing provision (30% social rent and 70% intermediate split) by habitable room, which would be subject to an independent review of the Financial Viability Appraisal..
- The full details aspect of the application will have a total 154 apartments comprising 104 affordable units and 50 market sale. Overall is 311 affordable units. Members may wish to comment on this.
- Housing Mix (1,041 units/apartments)

### Affordable

- 1 Bed 2P – 119 units (38%)
- 2 Bed 3P – 36 units (11.5%)
- 2 Bed 4P – 94 units (30%)
- 3 Bed 5P– 28 units (9%)
- 3 Bed 6P– 14 units (4.5%)
- 3Bed 6P Duplex – 20 units (7%)

Total 311 Units 29.87%

### Market

- 1 Bed 2P – 256 units (35.1%)

- 2 Bed 3P – 178 units (24.4%)
- 2 Bed 4P – 240 units (32.8%)
- 3 Bed 5P– 29 units (4%)
- 3 Bed 6P– 27 units (3.7%)
- 3Bed 6P Duplex– 0 unit (0%)
- Total 730 Units 70.12%

## 5.7 Quality Review Panel (QRP) Comments

- The proposal has presented to the Havering Quality Review Panel twice – the second on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Members should note that the proposal as presented to them may have changed to reflect the comments of the QRP. The following comments were made by the QRP:
  - *pleased by the positive response to the comments made at the previous review;*
  - *It feels that the changes to the building typologies, the arrangement of public space and the movement strategy are beneficial;*
  - *Concerned over lack of firm detail in relation to elevations, materials, and landscape. In particular, the quality and quantity of amenity space is still unclear, and the presentation has little to say on the character and identity of the place to be created;*
  - *The panel is concerned that the intensity of use proposed for the site leaves too little breathing room to deliver a high quality environment.*
  - *The fundamentals of the masterplan are largely in place, and the revised massing is successful;*
  - *Furthermore, the panel feels that the number of homes envisaged for the site is simply too high to allow for the creation of a high quality neighbourhood;*
  - *The panel is supportive of the principle of creating two landmark blocks (Blocks B and E) to frame the site but feels that the buildings proposed do not yet achieve this ambition. Their polygonal form, while interesting, is insufficiently well-resolved and undermines the coherence of the scheme's overall massing;*
  - *Covid-19 has illustrated the importance of dual aspect accommodation, which offers functional benefits such as cross ventilation, light and the potential for more interesting outlooks. Therefore, the ambition to create a relatively high proportion of dual aspect units here is welcome. However, the panel challenges whether all of the units described as such are in fact genuinely dual aspect. Assessment should focus on dual aspect units that offer genuine functional benefits, rather than nominal dual aspect units or those resulting in unacceptable overlooking;*
  - *The relocation of the main public space is also a positive step, but on the basis of the information presented the panel feels that it is hard to see how the public realm and amenity space will function;*
  - *The changes made to the scheme have largely been in the right direction, not least the shift in typologies from mansion to perimeter blocks. However, the panel feels that too little detail has been provided on the elevations and*



- materiality of Blocks A and B for it to have confidence that blocks outside the proposed detailed application will achieve the required quality;*
- *The panel feels that there needs to be much greater evidence that robust studies of daylight, wind effects and overheating have been undertaken across the scheme, and are informing the design work;*
  - *The perimeter of the site is still unresolved, not least in relation to the change in levels from Rom Valley Way, and the panel feels the proposed buildings are too close to the boundary of the site, further undermining the comfort of residents and the likely success of critical interfaces with the surrounding context.*
  - *Given the absence of critical detail, the panel would prefer that the design team took sufficient time to resolve these issues, and solidify them in a design code for the whole site, before proceeding to submit an application.*

## **Financial and Other Mitigation**

5.8 Any subsequent planning application will be supported by a package of measures secured under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or the Community Infrastructure Levy (as appropriate), to mitigate impacts of the proposed development.

5.9 The proposal would attract the following Community Infrastructure Levy contributions to mitigate the impact of the development:

- £25 per square metre Mayoral CIL towards Crossrail
- £125 per square metre Havering CIL

5.10 **Other Planning Issues:**

- Archaeology
- Biodiversity
- Housing provision, including affordable housing
- Microclimate - Daylight/Sunlight
- Sustainable Design and Construction
- Impact on local Education provision
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Healthcare
- Open Space and Recreation
- Flooding and Sustainable Drainage System
- Secured by Design Sustainable Design and Construction
- Secured by Design
- Servicing Management

## **Summary of Issues**

- 5.11 In order to assist members, officers have raised similar concerns/issues expressed by the Quality Review Panel with the developer team as outlined in Paragraph 5.8 and members may wish to comment in relation to these points in addition to any other comments/questions that they may wish to raise.

### **Conclusion**

- 5.12 The proposed development has been considered at five pre-application meetings and three design workshops with officers, and the scheme has been developed as a result. There are some aspects that require further work as identified in this report and Members' guidance will be most helpful to incorporate as the various elements are brought together.
- 5.13 Further, it is likely that this scheme may come back to this Committee for final review as part of the continuing Pre-Application engagement but only if members seek further clarification.