

REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT

13 December 2012

Subject Heading:

**P1048.12 – Network Rail Maintenance
Delivery Unit, Waterloo Road, Romford
(Date received 24/08/2012)**

Proposal

**Development of a Rail Operating
Centre (ROC) including associated
parking on existing operational railway
land.**

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context

**Local Development Framework
London Plan
National Planning Policy Framework**

Financial summary

None

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough	[X]
Championing education and learning for all	[]
Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages	[]
Valuing and enhancing the lives of our residents	[X]
Delivering high customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	[X]

SUMMARY

This planning application proposes the construction of a Rail Operating Centre on land to the west of Waterloo Road and south of the railway which is currently used for the purposes of the existing Maintenance Delivery Unit. This new building would provide a new signal control centre facility for the wider Network Rail region, including Crossrail and will be one of 14 major signalling centres proposed across the UK. The building would be 3 storeys in height and up to 450 staff would be based there operating the facility 24/7 on a shift basis.

An Environmental Statement for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 was submitted with the application and the Prior Approval application R0001.12 considered elsewhere on this agenda. This considers the potential environmental impacts arising from the development both from the construction and operational phases of the development, measures to mitigate them and potential alternatives. The environmental information contained in the Environmental Statement has been taken into consideration in reaching the recommendations contained in this report.

The main issues to be considered by Members in this case are the principle of development, visual impact, amenity, access considerations, ecology, flood risk and drainage, and other considerations.

Staff conclude that the development is acceptable and that planning permission should be granted subject to appropriate planning conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee notes that the development is liable for a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy contribution in accordance with London Plan Policy 8.3 and that the applicable fee based on an internal gross floor area of 7,007sqm is £140,140.

That the Committee resolve that having taken account of the environmental information included in the Environmental Statement, that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. *Time limit* -The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. *Submissions and Approvals* - Any application or submission for any other approval required by any condition attached to this permission shall be made in writing to the Local Planning Authority and any approval shall be given in writing. Any approved works shall be carried out and retained thereafter in accordance with that approval.

Reason: To ensure that the Development is satisfactorily implemented in accordance with any approvals.

3. *Accordance with Environmental Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures* - The development shall be carried out in accordance with the environmental standards, mitigation measures, requirements and methods of implementing the development contained in the environmental statement relevant to the application, appendices thereto submitted in August 2012, and any additional submission documents.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the appropriate standards, measures, requirements and methods as set out in the Environmental Statement and the mitigation measures identified therein.

4. *Parking Provision* - Before the building hereby permitted is first occupied, the area set aside for car parking shall be laid out and surfaced to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and retained permanently thereafter for the accommodation of vehicles visiting the site and shall not be used for any other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that car parking accommodation is made permanently available in the interest of highway safety, and that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC33.

5. *Materials* - Before any of the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples of all materials to be used in the external construction of the building(s) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed development will harmonise with the character of the surrounding area and comply with Policy DC61 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

6. *Surface Water Drainage* - Development shall not begin until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the agreed Flood Risk Assessment for the Romford ROC and MDU, reference REP-FRA-001 (Final), compiled by Ove Arup & Partners, dated 21 August 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed. The scheme shall include:

- Network drainage system designed for 1 in 100 year storm with an allowance for climate change (FRA section 5.3, page 15).
- A maximum surface water discharge rate of 5 litres per second (FRA section 5.3, page 16).
- SUDS and attenuation provided in rainwater harvesting tanks, permeable paving and underground storage systems on both the ROC and MDU buildings with the inclusion of a green roof within the ROC construction (FRA table 1, section 5.4, page 16).

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to improve and protect water quality.

7. *Accordance with Plans* - The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans, particulars and specifications to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:- The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

8. *Wheel Washing* - Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced, wheel scrubbing/wash down facilities to prevent mud being deposited onto the public highway during construction works shall be provided on site in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved facilities shall be retained thereafter and used at relevant entrances to the site throughout the duration of construction works.

Reason:- In order to prevent materials from the site being deposited on the adjoining public highway, in the interests of highway safety and the amenity of the surrounding area, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC61 and DC32.

9. *Storage of Refuse* - The development shall not be occupied or brought into use until a scheme for the collection and storage of refuse and recycling is submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the refuse storage is provided in accordance with the approved scheme. Refuse and recycling collection and storage arrangements shall be maintained in perpetuity in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason:- In the interests of amenity of occupiers of the development and also the visual amenity of the development and the locality generally, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

10. *Cycle Storage* - Prior to completion of the works hereby permitted, cycle storage of a type and in a location previously submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall be provided and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason:- In the interests of providing a wide range of facilities for non-motor car residents, in the interests of sustainability.

11. *External Lighting* - No development shall take place until a scheme for external lighting has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme of lighting shall include the low level lighting of the access road. The approved details shall be implemented in full prior commencement of the hereby approved development and permanently maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of security and residential amenity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC61 and DC63.

12. *Landscaping* - The development shall be carried out entirely in accordance with the hard and soft landscaping proposals shown on drawings no. AK930, AK931, AK932, AK935, AK936 and AK948 hereby approved. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised within the scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season following completion of the development and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In accordance with Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to enhance the visual amenities of the development, and that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

13. *Fencing and Boundary Treatment* - The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details of fencing and boundary treatment shown on drawing no's AK922 and AK943 hereby approved unless alternative drawings are otherwise submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The boundary treatment shall be installed prior to occupation of the development and retained thereafter in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of privacy and amenity and to accord with Policies DC61 and DC63 of the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

14. *Biodiversity* - The development shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation strategy set out in Section 7.8 of the Environmental Statement Romford ROC & MDU_ES_218061-50 issued on 20 August 2012 and as

shown in drawings no AK948, AK949 and AK950 plans hereby approved unless alternative drawings are otherwise submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The ecological mitigation measures shall be installed prior to occupation of the development and retained thereafter in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In order to ensure that the proposed development has an acceptable impact on biodiversity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC58 and DC59.

15. *Hours of construction* - No construction works or construction related deliveries into the site shall take place other than between the hours of 08.00 to 18.00 on Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 hours on Saturdays unless agreed in writing with the local planning authority. No construction works or construction related deliveries shall take place on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

16. *Construction methodology* - Before development is commenced, a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority making provision for a Construction Method Statement to control the adverse impact of the development on the amenity of the public and nearby occupiers. The Construction Method statement shall include details of:

- a) parking of vehicles of site personnel and visitors;
- b) storage of plant and materials;
- c) dust management controls
- d) measures for minimising the impact of noise and, if appropriate, vibration arising from construction activities;
- e) predicted noise and, if appropriate, vibration levels for construction using methodologies and at points agreed with the local planning authority;
- f) scheme for monitoring noise and if appropriate, vibration levels using methodologies and at points agreed with the local planning authority; siting and design of temporary buildings;
- g) scheme for security fencing/hoardings, depicting a readily visible 24-hour contact number for queries or emergencies;
- h) details of disposal of waste arising from the construction programme, including final disposal points. The burning of waste on the site at any time is specifically precluded.

And the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and statement.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

17. *Land contamination* - Prior to the commencement of any works pursuant to this permission the developer shall submit for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority (the Phase I Report having already been submitted to the Local Planning Authority):

- a) A Phase II (Site Investigation) Report if the Phase I Report confirms the possibility of a significant risk to any sensitive receptors. This is an intrusive site investigation including factors such as chemical testing, quantitative risk assessment and a description of the site ground conditions. An updated Site Conceptual Model should be included showing all the potential pollutant linkages and an assessment of risk to identified receptors.
- b) A Phase III (Risk Management Strategy) Report if the Phase II Report confirms the presence of a significant pollutant linkage requiring remediation. The report will comprise two parts:

Part A - Remediation Scheme which will be fully implemented before it is first occupied. Any variation to the scheme shall be agreed in writing to the Local Planning Authority in advance of works being undertaken. The Remediation Scheme is to include consideration and proposals to deal with situations where, during works on site, contamination is encountered which has not previously been identified. Any further contamination shall be fully assessed and an appropriate remediation scheme submitted to the Local Planning Authority for written approval.

Part B - Following completion of the remediation works a 'Validation Report' must be submitted demonstrating that the works have been carried out satisfactorily and remediation targets have been achieved.

- c) If during development works any contamination should be encountered which was not previously identified and is derived from a different source and/or of a different type to those included in the contamination proposals, then revised contamination proposals shall be submitted to the LPA; and
- d) If during development work, site contaminants are found in areas previously expected to be clean, then their remediation shall be carried out in line with the agreed contamination proposals.

For further guidance see the leaflet titled, 'Land Contamination and the Planning Process'.

Reason: To protect those engaged in construction and occupation of the development from potential contamination. Also in order that the

development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC53.

18. *Air Quality* – No development shall take place until a scheme for the CHP stack height has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the stack height calculations, inputs and outputs and a plan showing the location of the CHP stack and a cross sectional view to show how the stack relates to the building. The approved details shall be implemented in full and permanently maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and to ensure that there is no diminution of air quality in the vicinity of the development in order that the development accords with LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC52 and DC61.

19. *Site Waste Management Plan* – The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted Site Waste Management Plan version 2.3.2 received on 23 August 2012 unless otherwise submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable development practices.

20. *Use of Local Labour During Construction* – Before the development hereby approved is first commenced a scheme detailing the measures that are to be taken to ensure that local labour is employed during the construction phase of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented and adhered to during the construction phase of the development.

Reason: To ensure that construction jobs are made available to the local workforce in order that the development accords with LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC13.

1. Reason for Approval

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the aims, objectives and provisions of Policies CP3, CP9, CP10, CP12, CP15, CP16, CP17, of the LDF Core Strategy Development Plan Document; Policies DC11, DC13, DC32, DC33, DC34, DC35, DC36, DC40, DC48, DC49, DC50, DC51, DC53, DC58, DC59, DC61, DC62 and DC63 of the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document; Policies 2.8, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.7, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.16, 5.21, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.9, 6.10, 6.13, 7.3, 7.4, 7.6, 7.15 and 7.19 of the London Plan 2011, and the National Planning Policy Framework .

Note: Following a change in government legislation a fee is now required when submitting details pursuant to the discharge of conditions, in order to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and

Deemed Applications) (Amendment) (England) Regulations, which came into force from 22.11.2012. A fee of £97 per request (or £28 where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwellinghouse) is needed.

INFORMATIVE

In order to discharge condition 3 the Environment Agency have advised that they would expect to see the following information:

1. A clearly labelled drainage layout plan showing pipe networks and any attenuation ponds, soakaways and drainage storage tanks. This plan should show any pipe 'node numbers' that have been referred to in network calculations and it should also show invert and cover levels of manholes.

2. Confirmation of the critical storm duration.

3. Where infiltration forms part of the proposed stormwater system such as infiltration trenches and soakaways, soakage test results and test locations are to be submitted in accordance with BRE digest 365.

4. Where on site attenuation is achieved through attenuation ponds or tanks, calculations showing the volume of these are also required.

5. Where an outfall discharge control device is to be used such as a hydrobrake or twin orifice, this should be shown on the plan with the rate of discharge stated.

6. Calculations should demonstrate how the system operates during a 1 in 100 year critical duration storm event. If overland flooding occurs in this event, a plan should also be submitted detailing the location of overland flow paths.

REPORT DETAIL

1.0 Site Description

1.1 The proposed ROC site is located on a rectangular 1.85ha area of land west of Romford Station and Waterloo Road and is currently used as an existing Maintenance Delivery Unit (MDU) and for other rail-related operations. The flat areas of the site are covered mainly by tarmac surfacing and a large number of two-storey portacabins, with existing maintenance and delivery vehicles accessing the site via Waterloo Road to the east. The embankment to the south and area to the west of the MDU buildings are densely covered in trees and vegetation.

1.2 The application site is situated on a raised embankment that extends north to include the mainline rail land and to the west in the area of the proposed MDU site. Ground levels to the south and east are approximately 5 metres

lower than the site itself with an embankment running along the southern boundary of the site. With the exception of the embankment, the site itself is predominantly flat although the eastern end slopes gently downward towards Waterloo Road.

- 1.3 The MDU is responsible for a geographical area of railway covering part of London, Essex and other areas of Greater Anglian Region. The maintenance of the railway is carried out 24 hours a day from the MDU with teams working different shifts to ensure that there is a full 24 hour cover in case of incidents or track faults. The MDU buildings are centrally located and consist of a two-storey arrangement of Portacabins used as offices, changing facilities, a canteen, and for storage. The MDU is used to plan all the proposed maintenance work (in an office environment), as well as to store and prepare each shift.
- 1.4 The MDU is a base for a number of vans and specialist vehicles together with areas for secure storage. The existing car parking area is located to the north east of the buildings.
- 1.5 The northern portion of the ROC site is occupied by operational railway track used by Network Rail for tamper train operations. On average there is one tamper movement per night. In the eastern portion of the ROC site close to the junction with Waterloo Road there is an area of trees and vegetation.
- 1.6 Land uses surrounding the ROC site include operational rail land directly to the north associated with Great Anglian mainline rail services stopping at Romford National Rail Station directly to the north-east. Waterloo Road (A126) underpass is present directly to the east, beyond which lie commercial and industrial buildings.
- 1.7 A series of multi-storey residential (mainly key worker housing) apartment blocks on Union Road associated with the redevelopment of the Oldchurch Hospital site are located directly to the south. Nursery Walk is set in a cutting directly to the west of the site, beyond which lies the site for the proposed relocated MDU, whilst Romford Gas Works is located to the south-west.

2.0 **Description of Proposal:**

- 2.1 This planning application proposes the construction of a Railway Operating Centre comprising a 3 storey building with a footprint of 71.45m by 34.8m, a maximum height of 16.74m and a gross internal floor area of 7,007m² inclusive of roof level plant room and storage.
- 2.2 Vehicular access to the site would be from the existing access point on Waterloo Road to the south of the rail bridge/road tunnel and north of the junction with Union Road. There is also a private footpath from Romford Station accessed via Platform 4 with gates at each end, which passes over Waterloo Road along the railway bridge and into the site.

- 2.3 The new building would replace the existing MDU buildings and associated uses, the relocation of which is the subject of a prior approval application which is considered elsewhere on the agenda. Operational security arrangements for the building require that it be buffered on at least 3 sides by a 20m vehicle exclusion zone, resulting in the building being located closest to the northern site boundary / railway lines. Secure fencing would define the 20m exclusion zone, with security access control gates at all access points.
- 2.4 The upper floors of the building would accommodate the main rail traffic operational control facilities, together with meeting rooms, training and incident rooms and staff kitchen and break out areas. These are designed to enable the functioning area to be expanded as more of the network comes on stream for the modernised control systems. The ground floor would house administration offices, meeting rooms shower and changing facilities and support workshop.
- 2.5 The north and south elevations of the building incorporate a central recessed area in a contrasting curtain wall glazing with look alike insulated panels, with the addition of a horizontal solar screening bris soleil on the southern face. Materials for the sections either side of this would be Glass Reinforced Concrete (GRC) system. The east and west elevations would utilise the same palette of materials, but with vertical solar screening to the central first and second floor glazing. The eastern end would include the main glazed front entrance whilst the western end would incorporate a recessed terrace accessed from the first floor. The roof would comprise a shallow angled plant room facility with louvred sides with most of the roof area devoted to a green roof with sections for photovoltaic panels and rooflights.
- 2.6 The parking area to the east of the building would provide 108 parking spaces including 7 parking spaces for disabled users. 16 secured cycle spaces are proposed. A comprehensive landscaping scheme with provision of seating areas for staff and native tree and shrub planting is proposed. The area to the west of the building would also accommodate external plant structures.

Supporting Information

- 2.7 The application is also accompanied by a number of supporting documents. These include:
- Design and Access Statement
 - Statement of Consultation
 - Environmental Statement
 - Transport Assessment
 - Sustainable Design and Construction Statement
 - Contamination Assessment
 - Site Waste Management Plan

3. **Relevant History**

3.1 There are no previous planning decisions of particular relevance to this application.

4. **Consultations and Representations:**

4.1 The proposals have been advertised as a major development and as an application accompanied by an Environmental Statement by the display of site notices and by an advertisement in the Recorder. A total of 385 individual properties were notified directly of the proposals. No letters of representation have been received.

Consultee Responses

British Transport Police – Advise that they have been in regular contact with the Network Rail project team about the development and have been working with them to ensure that the design of security fencing and systems are of a high standard to reduce the risk of crime and to ensure that they meet Network Rail’s requirements.

Environment Agency – Have requested a condition requiring that a surface water drainage scheme based upon the FRA be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of development.

LFEPA – Satisfied with the proposals.

London Fire Brigade – No response.

National Grid – Advise that they have identified that it has apparatus in the vicinity of the development.

Natural England – No response.

Thames Water - Advise of the requirements in terms of surface water drainage and petrol interceptors to car parking areas. No objections are raised to sewerage connections.

Essex Wildlife Trust – Note that a lot of research and work has been done on the environmental aspects of the development and request that everything possible is done to maintain the integrity of the wildlife corridor.

Streetcare – No objections but a construction management condition is requested.

5 Relevant Policies

- 5.1 The development plan for the area consists of the Havering Local Development Framework (Core Strategy, Development Control Policies and Site Specific Allocations) and the London Plan 2011
- 5.2 Policies CP3 (Employment), CP9 (Reducing the need to Travel), CP10 (Sustainable Transport), CP15 (Environmental Management), CP 16 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), CP17 (Design), of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy are considered relevant
- 5.3 Policies DC11 (Non-Designated Sites), DC13 (Access to Employment Opportunities), DC32 (The Road Network), DC33 (Car Parking), DC34 (Walking), DC35 (Cycling), DC36 (Servicing), DC40 (Waste Management), DC48 (Flood Risk), DC49 (Sustainable Design and Construction), DC50 (Renewable Energy), DC51 (Water Supply, Drainage and Quality), DC53 (Contaminated Land), DC58 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), DC59 (Biodiversity in New Developments), DC61 (Urban Design), DC62 (Access) and DC63 (Delivering Safer Places) of Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document are also considered to be relevant.
- 5.4 London Plan policies: 2.8 (Outer London Transport), 4.1 (Developing London's Economy), 5.1 (Climate Change Mitigation), 5.2 (Minimising Carbon Dioxide Emissions), 5.3 (Sustainable Design and Construction), 5.7 (Renewable Energy), 5.11 (Green Roofs) 5.12 (Flood Risk Management), 5.13 (Sustainable Drainage), 5.21 (Contaminated Land), 6.2 (Providing Public Transport Capacity and Safeguarding Land for Transport), 6.4 (Enhancing London's Transport Connectivity), 6.5 (Funding Crossrail and Other Strategically Important Transport Infrastructure), 6.9 (Cycling), 6.10 (Walking), 6.13 (Parking), 7.3 (Designing Out Crime), 7.4 (Local Character), 7.6 (Architecture), 7.15 (Reducing Noise and Enhancing Soundscapes), 7.19 (Biodiversity and Access to nature) and 8.3 Mayoral CIL are considered to apply.
- 5.5 The National Planning Policy Framework is a further material consideration.

6.0 Staff Comments

- 6.1 The issues arising from this application are the principle of development, the layout of the proposal and the impact of the design, scale and massing on the character and amenity of the locality, the quality of the design, employment considerations, the impact on residential amenity, parking and highway matters and environmental considerations including energy efficiency and sustainability and nature conservation.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The land the subject of this application falls within an area that has historically been operational railway land. Although Policy DC11 would

normally require land outside of designated employment areas to be developed for housing purposes, this land is not available for development in the wider sense. It is, and will remain for the foreseeable future, operational railway land and accordingly there is no objection in principle to its continued use and redevelopment for railway related purposes. Moreover, given that the development is intended to assist with the delivery of a safe and reliable modern rail network the principle of development is fully in accordance with the NPPF and the London Plan.

Site Layout, Design and Visual Impact

- 6.3 The positioning of the building on the site is largely dictated by the internal space requirements for the building, the requirement for a secure perimeter, and the extent to which the shape of the site and the embankment along the southern boundary of the site restrict the width available. In the proposed location the new building will replace a long standing two storey array of portacabins which extend over a greater length of the site.
- 6.4 Towards the western end of the site the existing untidy cluster of containers will be replaced by an area of naturalized grassland, wild flower mix, tree planting and habitat enhancement measures around a number of mechanical plant enclosures.
- 6.5 The disposition of the access to the site from Waterloo Road and the need to maintain a secure perimeter for the building also dictate that the parking area for the site should be at its eastern end. This replicates the existing arrangement on the site. No objections are raised to the layout proposed which staff consider will enhance the appearance of the site.
- 6.6 The scale of the building is slightly larger than the existing MDU buildings but staff are satisfied that the location close to the railways lines is sufficiently separated from surrounding land uses so as to reduce the apparent size and visual impact of the development.
- 6.7 The design of the building is considered by staff to be attractive and in keeping with its surroundings. It demonstrates care in the choice of materials which are used to create a modern and sustainable building and incorporates many architectural features and techniques that are designed to reduce solar gain and improve sustainability which accord with policy and guidance.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 6.8 The proposed ROC will be a minimum of 50m from any residential properties to the north and separated from them by the railway lines and no direct adverse impact on residential amenity will arise.
- 6.9 To the south the minimum separation from the key worker housing on the former Oldchurch Hospital site is at its minimum 22m. The accompanying documentation demonstrates that there would be a marginal impact upon

levels of daylight to some of the ground floor windows of these flats, but such impact would be limited and given the northern orientation of such windows it is not considered that any such impact would cause significant harm to residential amenity.

- 6.10 The ROC will be a substantial building and will be visible from the surrounding area. From the north the building will be visible from various points within the Waterloo Road estate, but it is not considered by staff that this will be unduly harmful to residential outlook. From the south the building will be a dominant feature in the outlook from the three westernmost blocks of the “key worker” flats on Union Road, particularly those flats located on the upper floors. However, it is considered that the design of the building is attractive and incorporates louvred windows which will limit any light impact at night. The building will be 20m from the boundary and its appearance and bulk will be softened and screened by the existing woodland and scrub along the southern side of the site which is to be maintained and enhanced and by the planting of a screen of native Hawthorn and Blackthorn which is to be planted along the top of the embankment.
- 6.11 The nature of the use is not an inherently noisy one, being office based and staff are satisfied that no material harm would arise.

Environmental Considerations

- 6.12 Policy DC58 advises that planning permission will not be granted for development that adversely affects any site of Importance for Nature Conservation unless the economic or social benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the nature conservation importance of the site and only then if adequate mitigation can be provided and no alternative site is available. The policy also promotes the protection and linking of habitats via wildlife corridors.
- 6.13 In this instance the site is identified as both a Grade II Borough Site of Nature Conservation Importance and part of a Wildlife Corridor. However, staff are satisfied that the submission pays due regard to this designation. The proposal includes extensive new native planting and the creation of new, and enhancement of existing, habitats. The embankment area is also identified as a receptor site for wildlife being trans-located from the site of the proposed new MDU. On this basis the scheme demonstrates that there would be no harm caused to the nature conservation importance of the site or to its function as a wildlife corridor.
- 6.14 In terms of energy efficiency and sustainability the scheme is targeting a BREEAM rating of excellent which exceeds the Council’s requirements as set out in the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD which would require that a rating of very good be achieved. Network Rail is also committed to submitting a Design Stage BREEAM Assessment for an Interim Certificate prior to construction and to undertake a post construction

BREEAM assessment. These commitments are echoed by suggested conditions in the event that Members are minded to approve.

- 6.14 In order to maximize energy efficiency for the building it is proposed to use improved standards for the building fabric, high efficiency heating and cooling systems and daylight-linked lighting and energy efficient luminaires. This would be provided by means of low carbon generation technologies, specifically a Combined Cooling, Heating and Power (CCHP) system and a solar thermal array on the roof. Efficient water use is to be promoted by the use of low flush and flow sanitary ware and leak detection monitoring. In addition the ROC will utilise an established developed site and therefore represents a brown field development with demolition waste from the site being re-used as far as is possible on this or the adjacent site.
- 6.15 It is proposed to use porous hard surface materials wherever possible as well as employing rainwater harvesting and a green roof in order to maximize the use of SUDS throughout the development. This will ensure that the surface water run-off from the site is no greater than existing levels as required by the Flood Risk Assessment.

Transportation, Highways and Parking

- 6.16 The scheme does not propose any changes to the existing access to the site from Waterloo Road. The access functions adequately at present for both staff and servicing and the proposal will not give rise to any significant increase in use in either respect. No objections are raised.
- 6.17 The level of parking proposed exceeds the standard identified within the LDF for a development of this nature but is designed to accommodate potential peaks of parking at shift changeover times and is considered acceptable. Parking for disabled persons and cycle parking are also to be incorporated to the levels required by policy and conditions are suggested to cover this.

Employment

- 6.18 As identified in para 6.2, although the site falls outside of any designated employment area, the site has long been established in use for operational railway purposes and is currently the location of the MDU which supports 55 jobs. The proposed use is close to Romford Town Centre and the application proposes that there would be demonstrable benefits to the appearance and environment of the site and that the amenities of nearby housing will not be adversely affected. The application is therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Policy DC11.
- 6.19 It is anticipated that the ROC will, over time, employ approximately 450 staff, with the signal controllers working on a 3 shift basis to ensure 24/7 coverage. This level of employment will come on stream over a number of years as the rail network of the region is upgraded to the modern signalling system that will be operated from the ROC. The applicants advise that a

proportion of the signal control jobs will be redeployments of existing staff from other signal control centres and boxes throughout the wider region as the network is upgraded. However, there will undoubtedly be increased employment opportunities for local people both during the construction and operational stages of the development. A specific condition relating to the need to provide a scheme for local employment opportunities is suggested.

- 6.20 Current employment on the site within the MDU would be maintained by the proposed relocation of the MDU to the west as is proposed by the prior approval application considered elsewhere on the agenda.

Designing for Community Safety

- 6.21 Designing for community safety is a material planning consideration and Policy DC63 of the LDF is relevant, as is ODPM guidance 'Safer Places'. The facility is not accessible to the public but as a key component in the Network Rail infrastructure the ROC has high security requirements. These have been developed in close conjunction with the British Transport Police and raise no significant planning issues.

Mayoral CIL

- 6.22 There are no exemptions for developments that are in part related to Crossrail so the proposal is CIL liable and based upon on an internal gross floor area of 7,007sqm, £140,140 will be payable.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 Overall Staff are of the opinion that the proposal would not detract from the appearance of the area and that it would have a negligible impact upon residential amenity. The building is considered to be well designed and the development will have a beneficial impact upon employment prospects in the Borough assisting with the delivery of a more efficient rail network. The development will be sustainable and will have positive impacts upon the nature conservation value of the site. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with all relevant planning policies and it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

8. Financial implications and risks:

- 8.1 None arising.

9 Legal implications and risks:

- 9.1 None arising.

10 **Human Resources implications and risks:**

10.1 None arising.

11 **Equalities implications and risks:**

11.1 The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to equality and diversity. The development makes full provision for disabled parking close to the main entrance to the building,.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. The planning application as submitted or subsequently revised including all forms and plans.
2. The case sheet and examination sheet.
3. Ordnance survey extract showing site and surroundings.
4. Standard Planning Conditions.
5. Copy of all consultations/representations received and correspondence, including other Council Directorates and Statutory Consultees.
6. The relevant planning history.
7. Relevant details of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Article 4 Directions.
8. Copy of all consultations/representations received and correspondence, including other Council Directorates and Statutory Consultees.