



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

**Developer Presentation
to Strategic Planning
Committee Members
8 September 2022**

Pre-Application Reference:

PE/00213/2017

Location:

Bridge Close, Romford

Ward:

St Alban's

Description:

Redevelopment of the site for the following: demolition of all existing buildings and structures; up to 1,070 residential dwellings (Class C3); up to 7,012 sqm (GEA) of commercial floor space including office and flexible workspace, retail use, professional services and leisure use (Class E use); a three form entry primary school and nursery (Class F1(a)); a health centre (Class E(e)); a community centre (Class F1 / F2); together with associated infrastructure, including a new pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Rom; alterations to and provision of new vehicular and pedestrian access points; public open space, including a new public square, civic square and riverside walk; car, motorcycle and bicycle parking spaces and servicing spaces and other works incidental to the proposed development.

Case Officer:

Emma Hawthorne

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This proposed development is being presented to enable Members of the Strategic 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 proposed development is being brought forward by the Council, and these proposals have been the subject of discussions since 2016, but latterly pre-application meetings with Officers have taken place since the beginning of 2022. A pre-application meeting also took place with the Greater London Authority (GLA) on the 08th November 2018. Finally, these proposals were presented to the Councils' Quality Review Panel on the 10th December 2018 and the 20th June 2019.
- 1.3 Preliminary proposals have previously been presented to the Strategic Planning Committee meetings on the 10th January 2019 and 18th July 2019, and raised the following issues:

10th January 2019

- Ensure that suitable provision is made for the London Ambulance Service;
 - Opportunity to maximise the River Rom frontage, make the most of the space;
 - Ensure the riverside path is well lit to prevent anti-social behaviour;
 - The historical difficulties in connection with Havering Islamic Cultural Centre (HICC) relative to hours of use, vehicles attending it and the impact upon neighbours and whether it would be better to relocate;
 - HICC away from the site in the knowledge of these pre-existing difficulties. Applicant invited to consider this further;
 - Need to understand what parking management strategy would be employed if HICC are accommodated on the site;
 - How will safe access across Waterloo Road be secured?
 - School: how will the play space work?
 - School: practicality of school pick up and drop off given the layout of the site. Invited to consider other options;
 - Sustainability credentials and environmental standards to be employed;
 - Waste disposal: the applicant is invited to approach that innovatively given the extent of the development and the town centre location;
 - Further detail on estate management; and
 - How will flood risk be mitigated?
- 1.4 Members also requested that a site visit should be arranged to give examples of schools where stacked play space has been provided. In this regard,

Members undertook an accompanied visit to 2no. Primary Schools in Kensington and Chelsea, and Southwark on the 04th April 2019.

18th July 2019

- Further detail should be provided on the tenure and unit mix;
- The Council's housing needs survey was signposted to the developer, with an invitation that the developer look at that document and explain how the proposal responds to it, or not, as the case may be. In the latter instance, the developer was then asked to explain why not;
- Ensure that suitable provision was made for the London Ambulance Service;
- Could all of the proposed uses be accommodated on the site in a way which ensured compatibility;
- On the proposed Islamic Cultural Centre, further details were sought on the hours of use, likely capacity, travel patterns of the congregation and whether any noise mitigation measures would be included;
- The developer was invited to consider and provide details of how parents/carers and children waiting to go into the school can gather before the school opens in the absence of wider school grounds; and
- Clarification was sought on the security measures to be employed for the four separate school entrances.

2 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS

- 2.1 The proposed pre-application enquiry subject to review is likely to be a hybrid application for the erection of up to 1,070 dwellings, with a Phase 1 detailed application for development of around 500 dwellings, a three form entry primary school and nursery (Class F1(a)), new bridge over River Rom, east-west connection with new at-grade crossing on Waterloo Road, community centre, health centre, employment space and local retail offer, and public opens space areas.
- 2.2 The key objective will be to create high quality buildings and places, which helps boost the supply of homes, including affordable homes, within the London Borough of Havering. The scheme should also re-locate/ integrate existing employment uses, together with the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre and the Ambulance Station. The scheme will also provide enhanced permeability east – west, including the provision of a high-quality pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Rom.
- 2.3 Further to the submission of these proposals to the Strategic Planning Committee on the 10th January 2019 and 18th July 2019, the scheme has evolved thus:

- Inclusion of a site-wide energy centre in Plot A using air source heat pumps at roof level;
- Review of fire strategy for Plots A and B as a result of proposed changes to fire safety regulations (draft BS9991) – Plot A changed to dual core and Plot B four core;
- Additional underground refuse store (URS) bins to deal with potential increase in demand;
- Reduction in courtyard width to accommodate additional core in Plot A from 25m to 23m – resultant effect causes Block A1 and A2 moving closer in townscape views;
- Testing of tracking of large vehicles;
- Review of the school street environment and additional drop off bay to the front of the school to meet the requirements of the school ;
- Review of daylight and sunlight impacts and reconfiguration of openings and layouts to maximise BRE compliance;
- Alterations to internal layouts and external details;
- Adjustment of building heights around the school to reduce the overshadowing on the school courtyard playground – the school now achieves 50% compliance at March Equinox;
- Increase height of Block E to 13 storeys from 12 as a result of redistributed mass which was required to achieve school overshadowing compliance; and
- Maintenance of unit numbers but adjustment in mix across detailed plots.

Site and Surroundings

- 2.4 The proposed site is located to the south of the London (Liverpool Street) to Colchester main railway line, and to the east of Waterloo Road, which includes residential content; the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre which faces onto Waterloo Road. The southern boundary of the site is to the rear of the Ambulance Station and Oldchurch Road, which again includes residential content; the eastern boundary is formed by the River Rom.
- 2.5 The site is highly accessible to public transport and other services; it is 500 metres (12 minutes' walk) to the Romford railway station, and has a PTAL rating of 6a.

Planning History

- 2.6 None directly relevant to these proposals.

Planning Policy

- 2.7 National Planning Policy Framework 2021
London Plan 2021
London Borough of Havering Local Plan 2016-2031

3. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the Committee must consider are:

- Principle of development;
- Density, Massing, Form and Site Layout;
- High Quality Design;
- Quality of accommodation;
- Bridge connections over the River Rom, together with environmental improvements of the river environs;
- Housing provision, including affordable housing; and
- Relocation of existing uses, including the existing residential, the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre and Ambulance Station.

3.2 Principle of Development

- The majority of the application site is allocated for mixed-use redevelopment within the adopted Romford Area Action Plan (RAAP) (2008), under policy ROMSSA2, except for the houses fronting Waterloo Road and Oldchurch Road, the ambulance station and the community centre. ROMSSA2 states that the site should provide for residential development with some commercial uses (A3), provided that other specific criteria are met.
- Under the recently adopted Havering Local Plan (2016-2031) the site forms part of the Romford Strategic Development Area which is allocated to provide 6,000 new residential dwellings as well as a significant amount of new employment, retail, leisure and community uses, and connectivity improvements throughout the town centre and to Romford Station from all areas, including Bridge Close.
- Subject to the re-provision of suitable employment space and re-location of the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre and Ambulance Station, there is considered scope to provide residential development on the site as part of any residential led mixed use redevelopment. The applicant is required to provide supporting information / justification for this alongside the submission of any formal planning application.

3.3 Density, Site Layout, Massing and Form

- This site lies in the 'Central Setting' with a PTAL level of 5, densities on medium GLA density level of 250-350 u/ha should therefore be achieved. The RAAP (2008) states that residential development on this site should be within the 240-435 units per hectare density range. The proposal seeks to provide a

residential development at a density of 357 units per hectare which sits within the range identified in the site specific criteria.

- The layout of the masterplan is organised around the main internal route, comprising a north-south spine road which runs through the centre of the site and the east-west pedestrian and cycle route which includes a new bridge over the River Rom, and enhances the east to west connections from the town centre and Romford Station to the residential neighbourhoods to the west of the ring road.
- The layout of buildings within Plot A seeks to form a strong and coherent edge to the central public space which will comprise an active commercial frontage. The buildings have been orientated to provide enclosed courtyard podiums, oriented to the South for solar access, and shielded from the railway line and depot to the North. Within Plot B, the layout of the residential block has been designed to encompass two residential entrances; one to Bridge Close and another mirrored on the axis of the block opening to the Rom Walkway which provides a commercial frontage to the main square, a visual connection between Bridge Close and the River Rom and a cloistered courtyard with covered walkways to core entrances and cycle stores.
- The school block proposed comprises an L-shaped block which creates an open aspect to the playground. Further play decks are sought to be located in the south eastern corner of the block, between two teaching blocks.
- In terms of scale and massing, the masterplan proposes a variety of building scales and massing across the site which respond to specific considerations. The massing is proposed to increase in scale towards the town centre and also more height is achieved facing onto the ring road, especially on the southern edge. Within Phase 1, buildings in Plot A are anticipated to rise to approx. 14 storeys in height, whilst the residential building in Plot B would rise to approx. 9 storeys in height. The school is proposed to rise to 4 storeys. Within the middle of the site the height of the buildings will be generally lower.

3.4 High Quality Design

- The existing buildings within the application site have little architectural or historic merit and therefore it is considered that there is no in principle issue with the complete demolition of the buildings on the site, subject to its acceptable redevelopment.
- The proposals have been designed-led and as such a high quality new development that responds to the emerging regeneration character of the area, and the sites position to the edge of the town centre is expected deriving from a masterplan and agreed Design Code.

- A Design and Access Statement would be submitted to submit a formal planning application which would provide a detailed description of the main design principles and rationale underpinning the proposed development. Further details would also be provided with a Design Code and Parameter Plans which would inform and control the detailed design of the outline element of the development.

3.5 Quality of residential accommodation

- The detailed Phase 1 proposals have been designed to accord with the relevant planning policies and technical guidance, to ensure the delivery of high quality scheme. The use of the Design Code and Parameter Plans will then ensure that the quality of residential accommodation is maintained across future phases of the development.
- It is expected that all of the residential units within the masterplan would meet or exceed the minimum space standards contained within the Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard as required by the Development Plan. They are also likely to meet the minimum floor to ceiling heights of 2.5m.
- Within Phase 1, the proposal seeks to include a number of dual and triple aspect units and minimise the number of single aspect dwellings, especially single aspect north facing. Plot A is intended to comprise circa 50% dual aspect units and Plot B would likely comprise circa 40% dual aspect units, with none north facing.
- An internal Daylight and Sunlight Assessment has been undertaken at pre-application stage and has been a key factor in the design of the proposed development and would accompany any for submission. Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing levels have also been discussed during the pre-application stage, resulting in amendments to the massing and layout of the scheme. The internal Daylight and Sunlight Assessment would be submitted with a formal planning application and would assess the potential impacts on future residents of the development. The proposal is required to demonstrate that adequate light can be provided to all units and equally that the scale of the scheme does not adversely affect the light to any nearby residential properties.
- Local Plan Policy 7 states that the Council will require 90% of new build housing to meet Building Regulation requirement M4(2) 'Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings', with the remaining 10 percent meeting Building Regulation requirement M4(3) 'Wheelchair User Dwellings'. It is envisaged that the proposed development of Plot A and Plot B would meet this requirement by providing 90% of dwellings will be designed to meet building regulation M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings and 10% of the dwellings

designed to meet building regulation M4(3) Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings.

- Further, communal internal spaces are provided at ground floor level to provide breathing space for the residents. The main communal spaces are provided in close proximity to the main entrance and the courtyard amenity area, making them easily accessible and well observed – this will encourage communal spaces to be well used by a wide variety of residents. The provision of a variety of communal spaces is beneficial, with a busier space within the lobby area, and a quieter space next door that can be used for homework/home working. An additional internal play space provides an area for younger children and is directly accessible from the courtyard.

3.6 Bridge connection over the River Rom

- The development includes a new bridge across the River Rom, connecting to the western bank and providing a critical pedestrian and cycling link towards the Town Centre and Romford station. This element of the proposal would be included within Phase 1 of the development.
- The landscaping proposals would help to define this route and encourage the use of this space.

3.7 Housing provision, including affordable housing

- Planning policy 5 (Housing Mix) seeks to provide a range of housing sizes in new development and it would be expected that a reasonable proportion of larger size dwellings be provided in any redevelopment, subject to providing suitable amenity space.
- The location of the application site to the edge of the town centre, the provision of high quality communal facilities and the requirement to maximise housing provision within the Borough may mean that a larger percentage of smaller bed units might be acceptable.
- Havering Local Plan Policy 4 (affordable housing) seeks at least 35% provision of affordable housing with a tenure split of 70:30 in favour of social rent / intermediate housing. Policy H6 of the London plan details at least 30% low cost rent (social rent or affordable rent), at least 30% intermediate (London Living Rent or shared ownership) and the remaining 40% to be as determined by the LPA.
- The main affordable housing need of the Council is for 2 bed 4 person and 3 bed 6 person units of social rented housing. The proportion and tenure of affordable housing has not yet been confirmed, but the applicant has previously indicated that less than 35% affordable housing would be achievable; as such,

it would follow the 'Viability Tested Route' under the London Plan and therefore will be required to be supported by a Financial Viability Assessment (FVA) to determine the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing that the scheme can deliver. The Council would have the FVA submitted to support the application independently assessed to ensure that it is securing the maximum benefit for the Council.

3.8 Relocation of existing uses

- The RAAP (2008) states that the development of this site should provide assistance to existing businesses to find alternative locations. An ambulance station is located in the southeast corner of the site and an existing community centre, currently occupied as the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre, is located in the northwest corner of the site (fronting onto Waterloo Road).
- It is anticipated that the Outline element of the application would comprise a new community centre (Class F1 / F2), which would replace the existing community centre located on the site and could be used by the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre. Further details of how this strategy would be implemented are required to support the submission of any planning application, along with details of the off-site relocation of the ambulance station.
- At this stage, it is envisaged that the existing community centre (the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre) and the ambulance station can both stay operational during the construction and operation of Phase 1.

3.9 Financial and Other Mitigation

- The proposed development is within LB Havering where it will be subject to the Mayoral MCIL2 charge which is £25 per square metre Gross Internal Area (GIA) for eligible development. The Council's proposed CIL charges are currently under examination and may be in place by the time an application is submitted.
- Any subsequent planning application will be supported by a package of measures secured under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy (as appropriate), to mitigate impacts of the proposed development.

3.10 Other Planning Issues

- Permeability and highways matters;
- Mitigating flood risk;
- Archaeology;
- Ecological Impact and Mitigation;
- Landscape;
- Microclimate/ Daylight – Sunlight;
- Sustainable Design and Construction;
- Transport;

- Secured by Design;
- Servicing Management; and
- Agreement of Design Code.

Conclusions

- 3.3 The proposed development has been considered at meetings with Officers at London Borough of Havering (LBH), and with the Greater London Authority (GLA). The scheme has evolved, and Officers at London Borough of Havering now consider that the proposed scheme is nearing a position which would allow for a formal submission to be made. Therefore this scheme has come back to this Committee for further review.