



**Havering**  
L O N D O N   B O R O U G H

**Developer Presentation  
to Strategic Planning  
Committee Members  
20 April 2023**

<b>Location:</b>	<b>LAND NORTH OF FEN LANE, NORTH OCKENDON, UPMINSTER</b>
<b>Ward:</b>	<b>UPMINSTER</b>
<b>Description:</b>	<b>PROPOSED DATA CENTRE CAMPUS AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT</b>

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## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The proposal represents a significant development in the Borough, both in terms of the scale of development and likely issues to be addressed. It is therefore considered that an initial introduction for Members would be appropriate with further more detailed presentations to follow. The exact planning vehicle to bring the proposal forward has not at this stage been decided. Any final planning decision, regardless of the vehicle used, would rest with members of the Strategic Planning Committee. Any comments made upon the proposals are provisional and subject to full consideration of all material considerations including the comments received as a result of consultation, publicity and notification.
- 1.2 Officers have been in discussions with the developer/promotor of this site for the last year or so. There have been two previous reports to Cabinet in relation to the proposals, on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Both reports focus on the regeneration opportunities this proposal could bring forward within the Borough rather than making any pre-judgements about the outcome of any planning process, which is rightly for the sole consideration of the Local Planning Authority. . This is the first opportunity to introduce Members of the SPC to the proposal and obtain initial views before the proposal is developed any further.

## **2 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS**

## 2.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- The site is located to eastern site of the Borough, beyond the M25 and adjoins the boundary with Thurrock.
- The site measures approximately 200 hectares in area consisting mainly of open farmland.
- The site is located to the north of Fen Lane and east of Ockendon Road. The site is mainly surrounded by similar open farmland, although opposite Fen Lane is Top Meadow Golf Course and there is sporadic residential/commercial including a care home and sewerage treatment works close to the site. Approximately 450m north to the closest part of the site is the Warley Electricity Substation.
- The site is in an area designated as Green Belt. Other on-site designations on parts of the site include Mineral Safeguarding, Flood Zones, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and Archaeological Priority Zones.
- A public footpath runs through the site. A high pressure gas pipeline also runs across the site.
- The North Ockendon Conservation Area and associated listed buildings is to the west of the site.

## 2.2 **Proposal**

- The proposal is for a data centre campus comprising a number of buildings containing information technology infrastructure. It is envisaged that the total floorspace of the data centre buildings would be in the region of 330,000 sq m, which at the time of writing would be the largest data centre in Europe.
- The proposal also includes the following:
  - Technology-led horticulture/research facility in building(s) of circa 40,000 sq m.
  - 50,000 sq m of battery storage or grid balancing infrastructure
  - Green open space, including visitor facilities, biodiversity, research areas – in total covering about half of the site (105 hectares)
- New vehicular accesses to the site would be formed.
- The level of parking is to be confirmed, but each building would have its's own parking and loading areas. Details of cycle parking provision are to be confirmed.

### **Planning History**

## 2.3 **None relevant**

## 3 **CONSULTATION**

### 3.1 **At this stage, it is intended that the following will be consulted regarding any subsequent proposals:**

- Mayor for London (Greater London Authority)
- National Highways
- Transport for London
- Natural England
- London Fire Brigade
- Environment Agency
- Historic England – Archaeology
- Metropolitan Police Design Out Crime Officer
- Thurrock Council
- Brentwood Council

## **4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 4.1 In accordance with planning legislation, consultation with the local community on these proposals would take place as part of the planning process.

## **5 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 At this early stage, it is not considered necessary to identify or comment upon all the main issues that may be raised by the proposal. The purpose of this presentation is to provide members with an initial outline of the proposals and further briefings and opportunities to make comments will take place as the proposal develops and the planning vehicle to bring forward the proposal is confirmed.
- 5.2 However, given the significance of the proposal and the location of the site, the principal consideration would be the matter of assessment against National and London Plan Green Belt policy and whether there are any Very Special Circumstances (VSC) to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.
- 5.3 The proposal, due to its scale, would be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, setting out the main impacts and mitigation to address any impacts identified.
- 5.4 Other issues that will need consideration will include (although the conclusions on these issues may themselves add to any VSC consideration):
- Sustainability/Energy Use
  - Biodiversity
  - Highways impact
  - Landscape impact
  - Design quality
  - Impact on neighbouring amenity

- Heritage impact
- Archaeology
- Secured by Design

## **Conclusions**

- 5.5 The proposals are still at an early stage. Familiarity of the proposal and future input from Members would help to influence the final details of any development. Any particular issues members wish to raise at this initial stage would be helpful in order to incorporate as the various elements are brought together.