

# Romford Masterplan Consultation Statement

January 2025

## Contents Page

1. Introduction .....	3
1.1 Context.....	3
1.2 Masterplan timeline .....	4
2. Summary of statutory consultation .....	5
2.1 Bodies and persons engaged .....	5
2.2 How they were engaged .....	6
2.3 Consultation activities .....	8
3. Outcome of consultation .....	8
3.1 How many people responded .....	8
3.2 Main issues raised .....	9
3.3. Changes proposed.....	12
Appendix 1 – comments received during statutory consultation.....	14
Appendix 2 - Engagement summary report 2019.....	14
Appendix 3 - Engagement summary report 2024.....	14

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This Consultation Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This statement sets out details of the public consultation undertaken in respect of the Council's draft Romford Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It summarises the main issues raised in the responses received, and how these issues have been addressed.

In accordance with the Regulations, the draft Romford Town Centre Masterplan SPD was subject to a 6-week public consultation with local residents, stakeholders, landowners and developers. This took place from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

Romford offers exciting regeneration and development opportunities and is expected to accommodate significant levels of housing and economic growth in the coming years. It is identified as an Opportunity Area in the London Plan, and as a Strategic Development Area (SDA) in the Havering Local Plan. A Masterplan is needed to guide these opportunities in a way that respects Romford's qualities and history, strengthens pride in the town, and makes it a distinct and attractive place to live, work, and visit.

As such, the Romford Town Centre Masterplan SPD will be instrumental in guiding Romford's ongoing evolution, providing a vision and framework for good, sustainable growth that will benefit the whole community over the next 15-20 years.

Work on the initial draft of the Romford Town Centre Masterplan commenced in 2018 but was paused in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic and a change of administration at the Council. Work re-started on the Masterplan in 2023 which saw the document refreshed to take account of policy changes e.g. updated London Plan, as well as the updated consultation feedback. Details of all consultation undertaken is outlined in section 1.2 of this statement.

The SPD details a range of requirements to be delivered through the Planning process and sets out 7 key themes that are underpinned by supporting objectives and strategies. Each strategy provides guidance on implementing the overarching objectives and delivering good growth. The key themes are:

- Space & Landscape
- Movement and Connectivity
- Sustainability
- Inclusivity, Health & Wellbeing
- Character & Townscape
- Uses and Mix
- The Economy

The SPD also sets out strategic site guidance for 10 key sites in Romford which have been identified as being transformative in their nature. These are:

- Market Place

- North Street
- St Edwards Way
- Brewery
- Liberty
- Mercury
- Civic Campus
- Station Gateway
- Crow Lane
- Rom Valley Way

The Masterplan does not repeat policies in the Local Plan and should be read in conjunction with it. As an SPD the Masterplan cannot introduce new planning policies but will shape and guide future development. The Masterplan will be a material consideration when determining planning applications. This means that in addition to satisfying the requirements of national, regional and Havering's local planning policies, development proposals will also need to demonstrate how the guidance in the SPD has been considered.

## 1.2 Outline of previous engagement

The timeline below provides key details of all the previous engagement undertaken during the development of the Romford Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

**2019** – Informal public engagement to inform a first draft Masterplan. This included:

- 'Your Romford' website with +6000 visits
- 55,000+ e-newsletters and 100,000 households informed through the Living in Havering magazine
- 1:1 workshops with landowners & developers
- Pop-up engagement around the town centre
- Quality Review Panels and regular Member Workshops
- Public design workshops and exhibitions

**2020** – Landowner workshops

- Held Landowner briefings on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020
- 3 events on each day, covering the 6 major sectors of the masterplan; The Brewery, The Liberty, The Mercury, Angel Way/St Edwards Way, Station Gateway, Rom Valley Way

**2024** – Refreshed informal engagement

*8<sup>th</sup> April – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024* – informal public consultation to inform the refreshed draft Masterplan

- Digital launch on YourRomford.co.uk
- 5 Pop-ups around the Town Centre
- Five workshops with children and young people
- Instagram and twitter posts

- 3x E-newsletters sent to over 62,000 email addresses
- Stakeholder roundtable
- Quality Review Panel

Throughout 2024, key stakeholders were also engaged with including:

- GLA
- Environment Agency
- Transport for London
- Historic England
- NHS North East London
- Key Landowners

## 2. Summary of statutory consultation

Following approval from the Council's Cabinet on the 9<sup>th</sup> September, the Romford Masterplan SPD went out for public consultation from 30<sup>th</sup> September – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The consultation followed the process set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement which was adopted in 2021.

### 2.1 Bodies and persons engaged

The following statutory consultees were notified of the consultation via email;

- Canal and River Trust
- Coal Authority
- Department for Education
- The Environment Agency
- Historic England
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- NHS
- Highways England / Highways Agency
- Office of road and rail
- Transport for London
- UKPN
- Thames Water
- Anglian water
- Essex and Suffolk Water
- National Grid
- Cadent Gas
- Port of London Authority
- Homes England

- GLA
- Local nature partnership Sport England
- HUDU - Healthy urban Development Unit

Email notifications were also sent to;

- 67 landowner contacts
- The Havering Planning Policy database (138 contacts)
- 55 volunteer groups and charities across Havering
- Hylands
- Parklands
- Bower Park
- St Edwards Primary
- St Edwards secondary
- Marshalls Park
- St Peters
- Rise Park infant & junior
- BEP Group
- Frances Bardsley
- Gidea Park
- Mawney
- Concordia
- Crowlands
- Royal Liberty
- Squirrels Heath infant & junior
- Harrow Lodge
- Compass special school

## 2.2 How they were engaged

An email was sent on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 to the persons and bodies detailed in section 2.1 to notify them of the consultation. A reminder email was then sent on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024.

Dear Madam/Sir

### **Romford Masterplan Consultation launched**

The London Borough of Havering is inviting representations on the draft Romford Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

The draft SPD sets out a vision for the future of Romford, supported by objectives, strategies and site guidance.

The masterplan has been informed by engagement carried out in 2019 and 2024, with stakeholders, statutory consultees, and developers.

The consultation is open from **30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to 11:59pm on 11th November 2024.**

### **How can I comment?**

To view and comment on the draft Romford Masterplan SPD, please visit our consultation page <https://consultation.havering.gov.uk/planning/romfordmasterplan>

Responses can also be sent to [developmentplanning@havering.gov.uk](mailto:developmentplanning@havering.gov.uk) or by post to Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford, RM1 3BB.

Hard copies of the documents being consulted on, including the Habitats Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment screening, are available to view at Havering Town Hall.

The Council are also holding two drop-in sessions, where residents will have the opportunity to review the proposed plans, ask questions and provide feedback

- 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, 10am – 12pm, at Romford Central Library
- 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, 12pm - 2pm, at Romford Central Library

Please note, responses to this consultation will be published online. Personal details, such as contact information of individuals submitting representations will be redacted, although names may be published.

Kind regards,  
Development Planning team

**Image 1: Email notification\***

*\*It should be noted that a third drop-in session was added after the start of the consultation.*

A consultation page was launched on Citizen Space (the council's consultation platform) on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 ([Romford Masterplan - London Borough of Havering Council - Citizen Space](#)). The 'YourRomford' website was also updated with the formal consultation information and redirected readers to the formal consultation page.

The consultation was also publicised in the Council's e-newsletters 'Living in Havering' and 'Business Briefing', and through press releases published on the Council's website. Dates and details of these are below.

### **Living in Havering e-newsletter publications**

- 13 Sept - [Meet the Havering Small Business Awards winners, Romford Masterplan goes to Cabinet, tackling substance misuse](#)
- 20 Sept - [Romford Masterplan approved by Cabinet, Mayor commemorates the Battle of Britain, Havering in Bloom winners announced](#)

- 4 Oct - [Have your say on the Romford Masterplan, new medical centre opens in Rainham, Havering marks Black History Month](#)
- 11 Oct - [Tips for staying safe on dark nights, Havering wins big at London in Bloom, celebrating World Mental Health Day](#)
- 18 Oct - [Council launches 'Where We Live' campaign to clean up borough, Marlborough steps in to save Christmas, marking Anti-Slavery Week](#)
- 8 Nov - [Remembrance events across the borough, support available for residents this winter, the latest from Havering Police](#)

### Press releases

- Romford Masterplan goes to Cabinet  
<https://www.havering.gov.uk/news/article/1410/romford-masterplan-goes-to-cabinet>
- Romford Masterplan approved by Cabinet  
<https://www.havering.gov.uk/news/article/1414/romford-masterplan-approved-by-cabinet>
- Romford Masterplan Public Consultation opens  
<https://www.havering.gov.uk/news/article/1417/romford-masterplan-public-consultation-opens>
- A notice in the Romford Recorder was published on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## 2.3 Consultation activities

Three drop in sessions were held at Romford Central Library:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, 10am – 12pm, at Romford Central Library
- 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024, 5pm – 7pm, at Romford Central Library
- 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, 12pm - 2pm, at Romford Central Library

These drop-in sessions served as a way for residents and local people to come and ask questions about the Romford Masterplan. Informal comments were noted down by the team for consideration and people were encouraged to submit comments on the consultation website.

## 3. Outcome of consultation

### 3.1 How many people responded

101 responses were received during the consultation. Table 1 shows the breakdown of who responded. Full comments are detailed in Appendix 1.

<b>Respondent type</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Resident	69



Community Group	6
Landowner/planning rep	9
Statutory consultee	10
Councillors	3
Other	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>101</b>

**Table 1:** responses to the Romford Masterplan

### 3.2 Main issues raised

Overall, the comments made were supportive of the Masterplan. Valid issues that were raised covered minor errors in referencing or descriptions, terminology, and the status of documents or projects referred to. In other cases, further clarification was sought.

Some issues raised in relation to site guidance were not appropriate to be picked up, as they requested further detail beyond what the site guidance can offer, or requested changes that would conflict with other policy such as the Local Plan.

#### Townscape & height

Comments were made in relation to the description of the existing townscape and of references to the historic urban grain. In relation to existing townscape and height of Romford, comments suggested that the existing heights across the town centre should not be referred to as ‘low-rise’, considering the number of buildings considered mid-rise and taller, and that reference should be made to the heights of emerging buildings.

The strategic approach to townscape and height was supported, though within the site guidance some comments noted there was further opportunity for height, which were not considered appropriate to accommodate, given the masterplan’s consistent approach to promoting height and massing that respects the setting of Romford and its historic character.

In relation to urban grain, comments highlighted that references to a ‘historic urban grain’ should relate to the South Street / North Street / High Road / Market Place and adjoining streets and alleyways, but that areas where the Brewery, Liberty and Mercury shopping centres sit did not replace a historic urban grain. Instead, it was suggested that text should refer to a new ‘finer urban grain’ being introduced in these locations.

#### Viability

Comments were made regarding the viability of projects within the site guidance sites, and of infrastructure projects such as the potential new station entrance. Suggestions were made that viability testing should be highlighted for consideration given the social infrastructure components included within the site guidance. Comments also suggested further reference to the need for collaboration with relevant bodies such as Network Rail in relation to a potential new station entrance. These comments were made in relation to raising concerns as to the viability of certain aspects of the masterplan, such as deculverting the Rom, and in relation to querying responsibility for interventions, such as bridges across the Rom. The masterplan maintains that value added from such interventions will be wider reaching and more positively impactful than can be measured through point-in-time viability calculations, and that collaboration will be necessary for such interventions to be deliverable and practicable.

## Safety

Comments were made requesting further reference to the need to make Romford safer. With this, comments referred to documents and work elsewhere that could be referenced in the Masterplan. Outside of requesting further references, there was support for the masterplan's promotion of safe environments and to enhance safety across Romford, with comments revolving around clarity and bolstering of the narrative for safety, as well as for equity, inclusivity and diversity.

## Culture

Comments were supportive of the masterplan's narrative around cultural amenities as well as of the approaches to promoting local identity. As with safety, comments requested further references, clarity, and also bolstering of the supported sentiment towards culture. Comments also referred to adding descriptions to cover the relationship of cultural places with health benefits.

The reprovision of the Havering Islamic Culture Centre as part of the Bridge Close development was acknowledged, with greater clarity requested on the chosen location for reprovision.

## Public transport

Comments were made requesting reassurance that the bus network and associated bus infrastructure were safeguarded, and that any alterations to depots etc would require reprovision.

Site guidance for North Street highlights the potential for redevelopment of the bus depot site, and for the redevelopment in Station Gateway of the area currently used

for bus standing. Comments requested clarity on reprovision of these assets, and suggested further engagement with TfL would be necessary as these opportunities come forward.

The importance of buses in the local area was highlighted, and comments related to safeguarding bus routing and journey times reflected considerations that the masterplan had taken account of in its creation.

The importance of, and benefits from, the Elizabeth Line were supported through the comments, and comments picked up on the need to align with latest funding approaches following the now opening of the Elizabeth Line in Romford.

The positive impact of an additional station entrance was supported through the comments, particularly in relation to continued town centre growth, with further clarity requested on how this may be funded and delivered, and suggestion of enhancements to the interchange between train and bus.

## Parking

Comments referenced the importance of blue badge parking, requesting reassurance that town centre parking provision would support users who need it most. There were also queries in relation to car parking numbers, where some existing provision had been attributed to neighbouring site guidance areas.

There was support through the comments for the removal of car parking from the Market Place, and to the approach for a rational town centre parking strategy. Coupled with this was support for the promotion and enabling of active travel (walking and cycling), and to the need to focus car parking towards those who need it most, such as blue badge holders. These comments reflected the approach in the Masterplan, and further clarity and bolstering of the narrative was sought, with suggestions for further car parking needs assessment following completion of the masterplan.

## Infrastructure

Clarity was sought regarding the provision or reprovision of various infrastructure components, such as the Romford Ambulance Centre, and to the projects listed through the Implementation chapter's infrastructure delivery table. In some cases, further details were sought, such as to specific locations for the delivery or reprovision of certain infrastructure, and in other cases to update or rectify assumed pricing, or dates for delivery.

## Rom deculverting

The deculverting of the Rom was very much supported throughout the comments, with reference given to the need for such natural infrastructure enhancements. Clarity was sought on potential funding or approaches to how this may viably be delivered. Comments also related to the responsibility to deliver betterment through renaturalisation, referring to the possibility to quote alignment with policy, and to, if possible, go further than already outlined in the masterplan.

### 3.3. Changes proposed

In summary, no material changes were made to the Masterplan. Changes made were corrective, to add clarity, alter or refresh references, refine terminology, and add further emphasis.

Corrective changes were made to respond to inaccuracies such as misquoted parking quantum, or grammatical refinement. References to existing parking figures were attributed, in one case for example, to another site guidance area, and this was corrected. Across the document, terms used were cross-checked for consistency, and to ensure alignment with any policy or guidance that is aligned with. For example, terminology around cycle lanes was cross-checked to align with TfL guidance on how to refer to distinctions between degrees of segregation from traffic.

Minor changes were made to the foreword to reflect Crossrail being renamed as the Elizabeth line.

Clarity was added to certain elements, such as adding definitions to, for example, pocket parks. Additionally, the status of the conservation area being on the 'Heritage at Risk Register' was given direct reference, to ensure that this is positively responded to and rectified going forward.

The Masterplan Key Moves were expanded to include points specifically around safety, as well as refining the text across some of the other key moves. Where comments related to the vision, these were picked up and expanded upon across the key moves, objectives, and strategies throughout the document, with specific additions in relation to safety, culture, inclusivity, and greening.

Minor amendments were made to the vision, retaining its core message, but refining this to reflect valid comments on appropriate terminology:

- 'Refined' retail becomes 'enhanced' to avoid elitism;
- 'Culture' and 'inclusivity' are added to the list of things to focus on;
- 'Greening the town centre' is added to the list of things to focus on, as well as celebrating the river Rom; and

- 'New' residential community becomes 'existing and new' residential community, to reflect the importance of existing residents as well.

Changes were made to the existing description of townscape and height to reflect comments highlighting that the existing townscape is more complex than to be solely referred to as 'low-rise'. Where references to 'historic urban grain' were used beyond what was genuinely historic, these were altered to refer to creating a 'finer urban grain', in keeping with the historic urban grain of the town centre. Further references to the importance of the role of heritage were added, such as to the CT2 objective for Character and Townscape (elaborated below).

Where documents were referenced and required updating, such as referring to the 'Children and Young People Education Place Planning Plan', these were updated to ensure alignment. References to terminology were updated to ensure alignment with other policies, and to avoid contradiction, such as referring to 'seek' rather than 'require' going beyond 10% biodiversity net gain.

Where specific references to education commitments, such as the delivery of new schools, needed updating these were made in line with latest information.

Where further emphasis was needed this was added in the form of additional objectives, or broadening descriptions throughout. References to the positive impact that the Masterplan intends in relation to safety and inclusivity were bolstered, and an additional 'key move' was added in this regard. Reinforcing the role of Romford's heritage in shaping its future was made through the strategic approach. Changes to objectives were kept to a minimum, but specifically these were:

- MC5 [alteration]: Roll out a town centre public car parking strategy which rationalises car parking including removal of surplus, under-used or poorly located spaces ~~optimises the number of spaces~~, and creates attractive car parking areas that people feel safe to use.
- MC8 [alteration]: Promote active travel as an attractive alternative to vehicular travel, in line with the Healthy Streets Approach.
- MC9 [new]: Ensure that the town centre is as inclusive and safe as possible for all, including women and girls, day and night.
- CT2 [alteration]: Curate, nurture and enhance existing assets, including Romford Conservation Area, designated and non-designated heritage assets, and buildings of positive character, in order to collectively build a distinctive and coherent Romford character, embedding the role of Romford's heritage in shaping its future.
- CT6. [alteration] Building heights should respond to the character of their setting with any taller elements, in excess of 6-storeys, carefully considered through a formal process.
- CT6 [alteration] Building heights should respond to the character of their setting with any taller elements, in excess of 6-storeys, carefully considered through a formal process.

- IHW5: [new] Ensure that the town centre is as accessible and inclusive and safe as possible for all, including women and girls, day and night.

Where appropriate, references to the 'climate emergency' were made, in place of 'climate change', including within the Sustainability objectives.

The description of public space design has been expanded to cover, in particular, designing for inclusivity.

Minor amendments to text have been made throughout, including such terms as 'enabling' cycling infrastructure, to emphasise the importance of active travel, and the need to create specific routes in places.

A number of points were added to the strategies for Inclusivity, Health and Wellbeing, in order to respond to the comments assertion of the importance of creating a safer and more inclusive Romford. These points added clarity to what was already said, or was implicit, within the masterplan as a whole, but could be explained explicitly to add gravitas.

Throughout the Site Guidance chapter, a number of minor amendments were made, largely in relation to adding clarity or gravitas to certain points, though retaining the sentiment. As necessary, minor errors were amended.

The Implementation table was revisited, and updated to provide equitable descriptions across projects, and to refine references where necessary to projects.

Overall, the comments offered a helpful and supportive suite of updates for the masterplan to accommodate, in support of its overall sentiment.

## Appendix 1 – Comments received during statutory consultation

Refer to separate document

## Appendix 2 - Engagement summary report 2019

Refer to separate document

## Appendix 3 - Engagement summary report 2024

Refer to separate document