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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Main Road, Romford RM1 3BD
10 July 2025 (7.00 - 9.35 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group Ray Best

Havering Residents' Group Reg Whitney (Chairman), Robby Misir (Vice-Chair) and John Crowder

Labour Group Jane Keane

Also present for parts of the meeting were Councillor Oscar Ford and Councillor Chris Wilkins.

There were 15 members of the public at the meeting.

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

An apology was received for the absence of Councillor Tim Ryan.

24 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Jane Keane disclosed a Non-Pecuniary Interest - by virtue of being appointed a trustee on the Lucas Children's Playsite Trust. On the advice of the Legal Advisor, this does not preclude Councillor Keane from voting on any meeting decisions put forward.

25 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 May 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26 W0291.24 - PLAYING FIELD AT BALGORES LANE, ROMFORD

The Committee received a presentation for the construction of a 300 pupil school for pupils with special educational needs with associated access, pupil pick up and drop off, parking and outdoor play/amenity spaces.

The proposed development was presented to enable Members 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.

The proposed planning application has been the subject of pre-application meetings with Officers. There have been five (5) pre-application meetings including one workshop with officers and the scheme has evolved over the months. The proposal was presented to the Council's Quality Review Panel on the 6 May 2025. It was also stated that pre-application discussions with the applicants have included the principle of the development proposed including quantum of development, massing, height layout, access, parking arrangement and landscaping planning that have been undertaken by the applicants subject to a masterplan being developed for the site.

As set out in the committee rules, the Developer Team was given 20 minutes to present the scheme.

A Ward Councillor, Councillor Keith Prince also addressed the Committee on the development presentation.

The Committee noted the presentations and discussed the development. The following considerations were summarised as the points raised by the Committee at the meeting:

1. Second Presentation Request

The Committee has requested that the proposal return for a second development presentation. A revised submission will be required, with encouragement for the applicant to focus on following key areas.

2. Travel Modes and Site Access

Following extensive discussion regarding travel modes to the site, particularly in relation to car parking and pick-up/drop-off arrangements.

The Committee sought clarity on the percentage split of travel modes and reassurance regarding the capacity for minibuses and coaches to access and manoeuvre within the site. It was suggested that a drawing should be included to support this aspect.

3. Traffic and Road Modelling

Further detail is requested on road speeds and traffic flows into and out of the site.

Specific modelling of a 20mph speed scenario outside the school is needed to assess feasibility and impact.

4. Playing Field Concerns

Concerns were raised about the loss of playing field space.

Justification for this loss should be further developed, including evidence of historic and proposed usage.

5. Floodlighting and Outdoor Space

Clarification is needed on whether the outdoor space (eg MUGA) will be floodlit.

It was noted that this aspect is currently under development and should be addressed in the next submission.

6. Staff Parking Provision

The number of staff parking spaces in relation to proposed staff numbers was discussed.

Justification for the proposed provision should be expanded to demonstrate rationale.

7. Comparative SEND Provision

The Committee would like to see comparative examples of other SEND schools to better understand the proposal in context.

8. Ventilation and Landscaping

Further information is requested on the proposed ventilation strategy.

Reassurance is also sought regarding the longevity and maintenance of planting schemes.

9. Coach Access and Turning Space

Concerns were raised about the adequacy of turning space for large coaches.

It was suggested that the access route be widened to prevent obstruction and ensure safe manoeuvring.

10. Safety and Fleet Protection

The Committee recommends that both councils engage with operators to understand how fleets are protected, especially for large vehicles entering and exiting the site.

This includes contractors and delivery services.

11. Delivery Timing and Conditions

There was a note regarding delivery times and their convenience, particularly in relation to site access. It was stated that this should be captured and addressed in the next submission.

Members were informed that any further comments and questions be sent to planning officers within the next week.

27 P1498.24 - LAND ADJACENT TO ST MARY'S LANE, OCKENDEN, UPMINSTER

The application before the Committee sought full planning permission for the development of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 200MW for a temporary period of 40 years with associated infrastructure and works including highway access, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.

The site is located in the Green Belt and the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The development would have a significant impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. The harm identified by inappropriateness and significant harm to openness are given substantial weight in the planning balance.

The report advised that applicant has put forward a comprehensive case of very special circumstance (VSC) for the proposed development. The harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, are outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

It was stated that the conflict with development plan and National Planning Policy Framework was considered to be outweighed by the Very Special Circumstances set out and as such, officers consider the proposal to be acceptable.

In accordance with the public speaking arrangements, the Committee was addressed by an objector with a response by the applicant.

With its agreement, Councillor Oscar Ford and Councillor Chris Wilkins addressed the Committee and raised concerns that the development represents an unjustified intrusion into protected Green Belt. That a brownfield site can be found. That the proposed Battery Storage project, with its vast scale, would disrupt the rural atmosphere and change the character of the area.

Following the debate, the Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

The voting was three votes in favour and one against and one abstention. Councillor Jane Keane voted against the proposal whilst Councillor Ray Best abstained from the vote.

28 P1633.24 - VEOLIA ES (UK) LTD COLDHARBOUR LANE, RAINHAM

At its meeting on 8 May 2025, the Committee decided to defer making a decision on the application so that officers can obtain further clarity and completeness of the s106 Heads of Terms before making a decision. In addition, for officers to provide a response to the questions raised by Members concerning the proposals which officer were unable to during the meeting.

The report before Members was for an extension to the operational life of the landfill and composting facilities until the end of December 2029 and restoration of the land by 31st December 2031 with aftercare to 31 December 2036 (Amended description).

The Committee noted that officers considered the proposal to be acceptable, subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement pursuant to Section 106, Section 106A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and all other enabling powers to discharge the obligations in the original Section 106 dated 12 July 2016 subject to completion of a Section 106 agreement securing the planning obligations set out in the heads of terms under the recommendation and those obligations taking immediate legal effect and the planning conditions set out in the report.

Following the debate, the Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

Members voted unanimously for the resolution to grant planning permission.

29 **P0718.23 - VEOLIA ES LANDFILL LTD, COLDHARBOUR LANE, RAINHAM**

The application before the Committee sought permanent planning permission for the continued use of an adjacent compound area housing critical environmental infrastructure, including a gas engine compound, flare stack, and leachate treatment plant. This compound is operationally essential to the landfill site, as it manages the gradual release of landfill gas and the collection and treatment of leachate generated during waste decomposition.

The report advised that the development is considered acceptable in land use terms and raises no significant planning concerns in respect of design, access, or visual impact due to its containment within the existing compound area and screening.

Following the debate, the Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

Members voted unanimously for the resolution to grant planning permission.

Chairman