MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Main Road, Romford RM1 3BD
11 September 2025 (7.00 - 8.33 pm)

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	Ray Best and Timothy Ryan
Havering Residents' Group	Reg Whitney (Chairman) John Crowder and Laurance Garrard (substituting for Robby Misir).
Labour Group	Jane Keane

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

33 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received Councillor Robby Misir, Councillor Laurance Garrard substituting.

34 **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interest.

35 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36 **W0154.25 - FORMER HOMEBASE, DAVIDSON WAY, ROMFORD (ST ALBANS)**

The Committee received a presentation on the proposed demolition of an existing building followed by a residential-led development of the site, with some ground floor commercial and community spaces, and the creation of a primary school.

The site was on a long, low plateau with the main vehicular access being from Rom Valley Way. Developers planned to connect the site to the wider area using cycle routes etc. The site was close to other regeneration areas in Bridge Close and on the Seedbed Centre and Ice Rink sites. A new public

park would be incorporated as well as a primary school (on the border with the Seedbed Centre) and areas of small scale commercial use.

There would be a minimum number of car parking spaces onsite with a lot of pedestrianised areas within the development. There would also be new public access to the River Rom and safe, healthy green streets. Improvements to Rom Valley Way would include new street trees, cycling and pedestrian routes. Some 32 trees would be removed from the site initially. A diverse range of play areas would be incorporated for children of all age groups.

Developers felt that the planning benefits of the site included that this was a vacant brownfield site which would provide up to 600 new homes including affordable accommodation as well as a new primary school. Public engagement would commence on 23 September including a market stall giving information on 27 September.

A ward Councillor – Councillor Judith Holt also addressed the Committee.

Councillor Holt felt there had been too little notice given of the meeting and also of the provision of the slides used by the developers and thanked the Planning Officer for chasing this up. Councillor Holt was concerned at the impact of the development on local residents, particularly when taken in the context of neighbouring large developments. She questioned the impact on the local infrastructure such as Queen's Hospital and pointed out that the provision of the new school was ultimately a decision for the Department for Education.

The scheme would only provide affordable rather than social housing and Councillor Holt was also unconvinced about the lack of parking provision in the scheme. She was in favour of the park element of the proposals and the improvements to the River Rom.

The Committee then discussed the proposal. It was clarified that some parking bays would be provided for deliveries. The school site overlapped the Homebase and Seedbed Centre sites and, if the school was not ultimately built, the land could be transferred to the Council or retained by the developer. Barratt would make a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contribution if the school project was not brought forward.

It was accepted that the developers needed to assess the sewage capacity of the site in greater detail and this would be included in the Planning Application. The development plan for access to the River Rom would be submitted to the Environment Agency at the end of September. The central section of concrete wall by the river would be removed and developers were confident the scheme was deliverable. A Member asked for details of how the river would be protected from anti-social behaviour. Developers felt that the new scheme would lead to more people visiting the river area and a management company would also be on site.

Bulk storage would be available and it was clarified that there wouldn't be any shared ownership on the site. The overall height of the buildings would be similar to that of other planned developments nearby. It was clarified that the planned school would be in addition to that on the Bridge Close site. Engagement would be undertaken with Queen's Hospital about medical provision.

The road provision would allow a small number of vehicles to circulate around the site for collection, deliveries and fire access. Concern was expressed that the proposals did not take into account the high levels of car ownership in Havering but it was noted that this fell within the remit of the London Plan rather than the Committee.

Developers would check on any issues from survey work undertaken resulting from the site's previous use for landfill. This would include any build-up of methane etc. It was clarified that there would be five three-storey homes on the site but a Member felt that more provision should be made for elderly accommodation. Changes to the junction with Rom Valley Way would allow easier pedestrian access to the bus stops at Queen's Hospital. Subways under Waterloo Road could be removed or upgraded using CIL or section 106 monies.

Councillor Keane advised that she was a Board Member of Havering Museum and asked if an archaeological survey had been undertaken. This was the case and results would be shared in the planning application. Concerns over the height of the buildings was noted by developers and there would a disabled parking space provided at the new school.

An accompanied children only area of the park could be considered but developers felt that the park should be accessible for everyone. As required under the London Plan, a large number of cycle racks would be provided. Storage space for residents could be considered. Any impact of the air ambulance landing at Queen's Hospital would also be considered.

The following points were agreed as a summary of the Committee's views on the Development.

1. **River Rom**

   These proposals were broadly welcomed but it was important to protect the river both during the construction phase and from anti-social behaviour once the scheme was completed.

2. **Proposed New Park**

   Issues raised regarding the park's size, practicality, shading and who will use it.

3. **Commercial Floor Space**

   Further details requested of how this will be used.

4. **Parking Provision**

   While the position with the London Plan is noted, more parking should be provided for the commercial spaces. Details of how parking will be managed and the provision of disabled parking should also be provided.

5. **New School**

   Clarity needed over whether this will be delivered.

6. **Infrastructure**

   It was suggested that some of the commercial floor space could be used for health provision. There should also be better linkages to the hospital for pedestrians.

   The capacity of the local bus network should be considered and a financial contribution sought for increasing this.

7. **General Design Issues**

   The Committee is disappointed at the lack of family homes in the development and does not feel that a 16 storey block is contextually appropriate. There should also be some provision for senior living. The sewage capacity should be investigated and confirmed.

   Bulk storage for residents should be provided and measures to achieve noise attenuation on the site should be included as part of the Planning Application. The flight path of the Air Ambulance should be fully investigated as should any issues with previous contamination of the land.

8. **Archaeological Study**

   The outcome of the archaeological study should be provided to the Committee.

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

Chairman

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