

# GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2272

**Title:** Polar Ford disposal

### **Executive Summary:**

GLP Land and Property (GLAP) is seeking to dispose of the Polar Ford site in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham to the Secretary of State for Education for a Special Educational Needs school to support the growing population of the area.

The Borough and Education & Skills Funding Authority (ESFA) have demonstrated the demand for the new facility and are using adjacent land secured through Section 106 to create an educational campus and create efficiencies for a significant education colocation.

### **Decision:**

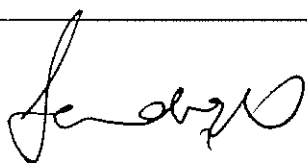
The Mayor approves the disposal on a freehold basis of the Polar Ford site in LB Barking & Dagenham to the Secretary of State for Education for a new Special Educational Needs School.

### **Mayor of London**

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision, and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

**Signature:**



**Date:**

29/5/17

## PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

### Decision required – supporting report

#### 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Polar Ford site was inherited by GLAP from the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC) in 2012. The LTGDC had acquired the site and cleared it of structures and since GLAP took ownership no further activity has been undertaken on the site, save to secure it and prevent fly-tipping as far as possible.
- 1.2 Initially GLAP held back from disposing of the site until the nearby larger Beam Park and Stamping Plant sites were identified for development. It was expected that both these sites would deliver significant residential development in an area that was designated for Strategic Industrial Land and therefore it was preferable to have the wider precedent set by the two strategic sites before taking Polar Ford to the market as it was a much smaller site and unlikely to set a planning precedent. Both the Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) and Local Plan now identify the site as suitable for release from the Strategic Industrial Land designation.
- 1.3 A meeting was convened by GLAP to include the ESFA, LocatED (the government-owned property company acting on behalf of the Secretary of State) and LB Barking & Dagenham's Planning and Education departments at which the potential for a mixed-use development on this site was explored in further detail. It was identified that LocatED is progressing other mixed-use schemes which include both educational and residential uses these tend to be on bigger sites where the uses can be successfully stacked and therefore there was a precedent for the colocation, including in the provision of Special Educational Needs facilities.
- 1.4 However, as well as the Polar Ford site, around 2 hectares has been secured on the adjacent former Stamping Plant site for educational uses and therefore the total land available is just over 3 hectares. On this land it is proposed that a primary, secondary and special school will be built to meet the growing population needs of the area and create an educational campus with a concentration of the three facilities in a single location.
- 1.5 ESFA standards for school accommodation are widely variable because of the ways in which the schools are calculated but the ESFA has confirmed that for the schools proposed on Polar Ford & the Stamping Plant the following would be required:
  - Special School for 90 students – between 1Ha to 3Ha
  - Primary & Secondary School site – between 3Ha to 10Ha depending on the combination of the buildings and facilities offered.
  - Total – **between 4Ha and 13Ha**
- 1.6 It has been demonstrated elsewhere, including at Barking Riverside, that colocation of schools can reduce the overall requirement of land but current designs still suggest that the main school buildings will need to be 4 or 5 storeys across the 3 hectares available to accommodate the three schools in this location.
- 1.7 Having additional residential on top of these buildings is therefore unlikely to create a positive urban landscape and is not welcomed by the borough's planners. It is also likely to slow down the delivery of the educational premises which are required to support the growth of housing in the local area and prevent the building an element of educational capacity to facilitate future housing delivery and ensure that it is not subject to further educational provision limits.

- 1.8 In order to progress the transaction GLAP and LocatED have commissioned a joint valuation of the site (on a residential basis delivering 50% affordable housing in line with the Mayor's priorities for delivering affordable housing) to enable the two bodies to meet their statutory requirements to respectively achieve/not pay more than best value.

## **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1. Bringing back into use a redundant site the development will deliver a new special educational needs school for 176 pupils to meet the needs of the growing local population and the demand of the wider area and to support the delivery of an educational campus across the two development sites.
- 2.2. GLAP will realise a capital receipt for the site reflecting the residential valuation.

## **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and GLA are subject to a public sector equality duty and must have 'due regard' to the need to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (all except the last being "relevant" protected characteristics).
- 3.2. The disposal will be subject to planning which will require appropriate equalities compliance.

## **4. Other considerations**

### **4.1. Commercial:**

GLAP has appointed a joint valuation by JLL in the interests of agreeing a value for the site with LocatED quickly and to the satisfaction of both public bodies. The sale price will be subject to a deduction of up to 75% for pre-existing abnormal ground conditions which GLAP and LocatED will have independently reviewed and verified to ensure that the costs are fairly allocated.

### **4.2. Programme:**

LB Barking and Dagenham are keen for the transaction to be completed quickly as there is a block on expenditure for their temporary school until they have identified and secured a permanent location. GLAP and LocatED are therefore targeting to exchange the Sale Agreement before the end of the financial year to enable LBBD to access the funding in the 17/18 year.

## **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1. Financial comments are contained in Part 2.

## **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1. 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) "GLA Act") gives the Mayor a general power to do anything which he considers will further one or more of the principal purposes of the GLA. The principal purposes, as set out in section 30(2) of the GLA Act are:
- (1) promoting economic development and wealth creation in Greater London;
  - (2) promoting social development in Greater London; and
  - (3) promoting the improvement of the environment in Greater London.

- 6.2 Given the above and section 34 of the GLA Act, which allows the Mayor to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of his functions, the foregoing sections of this report indicate that the Mayor has the power to make the requested decisions.

## **7. Planned delivery approach and next steps**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Finalise valuation	March 2018
Agree Sale Contract	March 2018
Secure Mayoral Approval	March 2018
Exchange of contracts	March 2018
Completion of contracts	August 2018

### **Appendices and supporting papers:**

#### **Appendix 1: Site plan**

**Public access to information**

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

**Part 1 Deferral:**

**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES**

If YES, for what reason: To enable the transaction to exchange.

Until what date: 19 April 2018

**Part 2 Confidentiality:** Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form – YES**

**ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to  
confirm the  
following (✓)

**Drafting officer:**

Philippa Bancroft has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Sponsoring Director:**

David Lunts has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

**Mayoral Adviser:**

James Murray has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

**Advice:**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

**Corporate Investment Board**

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on the 26 March 2018.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature

*M. D. RLC*

Date

26.3.18

**CHIEF OF STAFF:**

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

Signature

*D. Bellamy*

Date

26 / 3 / 2018.

