

Ilford County High School, Barkingside

in the London Borough of Redbridge

planning application no.1239/15

Strategic planning application stage 1 referral

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008.

The proposal

Erection of a three storey teaching block, new hard play area, emergency access from Mossford Lane (used as contractor entrance during construction period), rationalisation of storage spaces, erection of a bin store, sprinkler tank, additional car and cycle parking provision, and landscaped social space to front of proposed teaching block.

The applicant

The applicant is **Kier Construction Ltd** and the architect is **ADP Architects**.

Strategic issues

Education, open space, playing fields, design, access, sustainable development and transport are the strategic issues relevant to this application. However, this short report deals *only* with **principle of land use**. Other **planning issues** including **comments from TfL** can be dealt with by the Council.

Recommendation

That Redbridge Council be advised that the application complies with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 29 of this report and does not need to be referred back to the Mayor. The Council should, however, take account of the comments made in that paragraph of this report.

Context

1 On 1 April 2015 the Mayor of London received documents from Redbridge Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. Under the provisions of The Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor has until 12 May 2014⁵ to provide the Council with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. The Mayor may also provide other comments. This report sets out information for the Mayor's use in deciding what decision to make.

2 The application is referable under the following categories of the Schedule to the Order 2008:

- Cat 3C: *"Development which is likely to prejudice the use as a playing field of more than 2 hectares of land which— (a) is used as a playing field at the time the relevant application for planning permission is made; or (b) has at any time in the five years before the making of the application been used as a playing field."*

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

9 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Principle of development *London Plan;*
- Education *London Plan;*
- Open space *London Plan;*
- Playing fields *London Plan;*

10 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plans in force for the area are the 2008 Redbridge Core Strategy and the Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Documents and the 2015 London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2011).

11 The National Planning Policy Framework and Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework are also relevant material considerations.

Principle of land use: School expansion on locally important urban open space and playing fields

12 Education use on open space: In relation to the provision of educational facilities, policy 3.18 'Education facilities' of the London Plan states that *"Development proposals which enhance education and skills provision will be supported, including new build, expansion of existing facilities or change of use to educational purposes"*.

13 Ilford County High School is one of the eighteen secondary schools in Redbridge and it is run by the Council. It is a popular and successful 4 FE Grammar School for Boys with a total population of 600 pupils and 325 sixth-formers. The school is currently 4-forms of entry and is looking to expand by 2FE to cater for an additional 420 pupils.

14 Although the application site is designated as a locally important urban open space on the Council's proposals map and that the application is referred as a departure, the principle of the use, which is education, has been established on the site for a long time and the need for expansion is demonstrated in the planning statement.

15 The National Planning Policy Framework 'Planning for schools development' states that 'there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools'. It is acknowledged there is a pressing need for additional school places in Redbridge. The applicant has provided further justification for choosing this site. Given this and the overriding need for additional education facilities the proposal is acceptable.

Playing fields

16 There is a small fraction of encroachment of playing fields on the south-western end of the existing playing fields, but this is compensated for by the provision of improved sport facilities. The applicant has stated that consultation has been carried out with Sport England, and the proposals have been confirmed as acceptable. Whilst this is welcomed, the applicant should continue to work with Sport England at every stage of the development. The applicant should also engage with the local communities in its development of community use strategy of the playing field facilities.

Urban design

17 There are no strategic concerns. As shown below the proposed development reflects the contemporary approach to the design and purpose built. The building will promote a positive learning environment and through the judicious use of natural light, space and materials.



Inclusive access

18 The design and access statement demonstrates that circulation routes are kept simple to ease way finding and are based on one 1800mm wide central corridor, with a stairwell at either end serving all floors. A platform lift is located in the centre of the plan to provide full accessibility to all floor areas.

19 The design and access statement confirmed that the scheme will be fully compliant with the current Approved Document M of the Building Regulations and BS8300, which is welcomed. All the proposed inclusive design measures should be secured.

Transport for London's comments

Car and cycle parking

20 It is proposed that one car parking space will be provided per two members of staff. Justification for this level of provision should be provided and if accepted measures put in place via the Travel Plan to reduce car parking and encourage more sustainable transport over time by staff working at both the existing and new parts of the school.

21 The 2015 Further Alterations to the London Plan have now been adopted and require that one cycle space is provided per every eight students and eight staff. This provision should be in a secure and covered location. Electric vehicle charging points (EVCP's) and Blue Badge parking should be provided in accord with London Plan policy, and secured through condition. In addition space should be identified for the parking and drop off/pick up of pupils by minibus and coach.

Traffic and on-street parking impact

22 It is noted that the predicted trip generation indicates that there is likely to be on street parking and drop off/pick up associated with pupils being driven to/from school with consequent traffic generation, environmental and safety impacts. Measures should be put in place at this stage and in the travel plan to reduce reliance by pupils upon the car as a mode of transport and encourage use of more sustainable means.

Public transport

23 TfL requests an assessment by the applicant of the of bus stops serving the site and a S106 contribution made to their improvement if they do not comply with TfL's Accessible Bus Stop design guidance.

Travel plan and construction logistics

24 In the event permission is granted the school's travel plan should be updated accordingly. A School Management Plan to work in tandem with the travel plan to for example stagger school arrivals and departures would also be useful. Construction logistics arrangements and management should also be secured by condition/s106 agreement.

Summary

25 TfL does not object in principle to the proposed development. To ensure compliance with the London Plan transport policies, there are a number of detailed matters which need to be clarified and addressed either at this stage or through suitable conditions and s106 provisions.

Local Planning Authority Position

26 Redbridge Council planning officers have yet to confirm their position.

Legal considerations

27 Under the arrangements set out in Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor is required to provide the local planning authority with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. Unless notified otherwise by the Mayor, the Council must consult the Mayor again under Article 5 of the Order if it subsequently resolves to make a draft decision on the application, in order that the Mayor may decide whether to allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged, or direct the Council under Article 6 of the Order to refuse the application, or issue a direction under Article 7 of the Order that he is to act as the local planning authority for the purpose of determining the application and any connected application. There is no obligation at this present stage for the Mayor to indicate his intentions regarding a possible direction, and no such decision should be inferred from the Mayor's statement and comments.

Financial considerations

28 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

29 London Plan policies on principle of land use: school provision on open space and playing fields are discussed in this short report. The proposed development complies with policies of the London plan on principle of land use, for the following reasons:

- **Principle of land use:** The proposed school expansion on the site is supported in terms of land use.
- Other **planning issues** can be dealt with by the Council including consideration to TfL's comments as discussed above.
- The application does **not** need to be referred back to the Mayor.

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