Gascoigne West, Barking
in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
planning application no. 17/00977/OUT

Strategic planning application stage 1 referral

The proposal
Outline application to provide a maximum of 850 residential units, up to 350 sq.m. of flexible commercial or community floorspace, together with an energy centre, associated cycle and car parking and landscaping.

The applicant
The applicant is the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (Regeneration). The architect is Fraser Brown MacKenna.

Strategic issues summary

Estate regeneration: The reprovision of existing social rented units is supported, but the applicant must provide full details of habitable rooms and floorspaces, the unit mix of existing and reprovided housing and its tenant rehousing proposals (paragraphs 19-22).

Housing and affordable housing: The applicant must provide viability material to show its proposals would maximise affordable housing. This will be rigorously interrogated by GLA officers and early and late stage review clauses must be secured. The applicant should also clarify whether and in what circumstances C2 (Assisted living/care home) housing might be provided and what impact this would have on its approach to affordable housing (paragraphs 23-29).

Transport: The application should guarantee The Shaftesburys would be bus only, a bus gate provided and the location and delivery of additional bus stops and proposed highway works confirmed. Further information is also required on car and cycle parking (paragraphs 38-39).

Outstanding issues relating to children’s play space, predicted carbon savings, the heat network and energy centre also need to be addressed.

Recommendation
That Barking and Dagenham Council be advised that the application does not comply with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 44 of this report; but that the possible remedies set out in the paragraph could address these deficiencies.
On 16 June 2017, the Mayor of London received documents from the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. Documentation confirming the applicant’s intended approach to affordable housing was submitted on 21 July 2017. Under the provisions of The Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008, the Mayor may provide the Council with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking those views. The Mayor may also provide other comments. This report sets out information for the Mayor’s use in deciding what decision to make.

The application is referable under Categories 1A and 1C of the Schedule to the Order 2008:

- Category 1A: Development which comprises or includes the provision of more than 150 houses, flats, or houses and flats.
- Category 1C: Development which comprises or includes the erection of a building of one or more of the following descriptions - (c) the building is more than 30 metres high and is outside the City of London.

Once Barking and Dagenham Council has resolved to determine the application, it is required to refer it back to the Mayor for his decision as to whether to direct refusal; take it over for his own determination; or allow the Council to determine it itself.

The Mayor of London’s statement on this case will be made available on the GLA website www.london.gov.uk.

The application site forms part of the larger 1960’s Gascoigne Estate located between Barking Town Centre and the River Roding. It also falls within the area covered by the London Riverside Opportunity Area Planning Framework which identifies Barking Town Centre as a key regeneration opportunity in light of its excellent public transport accessibility and its rail and underground links. It is bounded to the north by St Pauls Road and to the east by Gascoigne Road which runs on a north/south alignment and provides access onto the A13 Alfred’s Way. A prominent employment area, known as the New England Industrial Estate is located to the south of the site adjacent the A13 (Alfred’s Way) which comprises primarily of B2 and B8 industrial units. A small section of the application site faces the Abbey Road Conservation Area.

The site’s context has undergone significant change over recent years with new residential and commercial uses being introduced, most notably to the west of the application site adjacent the Roding. Sections of the Gascoigne Estate have also undergone recent regeneration and intensification and the application site forms part of the wider Barking Town Centre Housing Zone which was agreed by the former Mayor in July 2015 to help unlock or accelerate the delivery of up to 27,780 new homes across London (MD1457).

The applicant has confirmed that the application site currently contains 175 dwellings within low and medium rise blocks of which 93 (53%) are owned and managed by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham as social rented homes and the remaining 82 (47%) are in private leasehold ownership having being bought under Right to Buy.
The application site is located approximately 1.5 kilometres from Barking station which is served by the District and Hammersmith & City underground lines and by National Rail services. It is also the eastern terminus of the Gospel Oak to Barking London Overground line. The site’s PTAL rating varies from 1 to 6a, on a scale of 1-6b, where 6b is the highest, with the highest PTAL’s being recorded to the east of the site, closest to Barking Town Centre.

The A13 (Alfred’s Way) is the nearest part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), located approximately 0.5 kilometres to the south of the application site. The A124, London Road, is the closest part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and is located 0.5 kilometres away. The nearest bus stops are on Gascoigne Road with further stops along Alfred’s Way 900 metres away at Perth Road and St Margaret’s. There is also a stop on King Edwards Road, to the east of the site. All these are served by route 62, with the 173 and 673 also serving a stop on Alfred’s Way.

**Details of the proposal**

The application proposes the demolition of 175 existing dwellings and their replacement by up to 850 new dwellings, (C3 dwelling house or C2 assisted living/care homes), up to 350 sq.m. of flexible commercial or community floorspace (A1, A2, A3, D1 or D2), and an energy centre, together with car and cycle parking and landscaping. This would be provided within new buildings ranging from 2 to 15 storeys in heights together with new pedestrian and vehicle connections and a series of new public and private open spaces as indicated below.

**Redline boundary and proposed building form** (Source: submitted Landscape Design Strategy)

**Case history**

A pre-application meeting to discuss these proposals was held with the GLA on 10 January 2017 where the applicant proposed 835 new units and indicated that 350 (42%) of the new units would be either affordable rented or intermediate tenures, but no detail of their affordability was provided. This meeting and subsequent written advice offered strategic support for the proposals and the resultant increase in homes they envisaged, but raised concerns over the lack of detail on the new affordable housing, the level of family housing, the approach to children’s play space, how level changes across and within the site would be addressed, the location of entrances and active frontages, flood risk, energy and transport.
The applicant was also specifically advised to confirm the number of social housing units it was proposing to demolish and to include replacement social rented housing within its application. The need to demonstrate how its proposals would accord with the principles set out in the Mayor’s 2016 draft Good Practice Guide to Estate regeneration was also stressed.

**Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance**

13 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- **Housing**  
  London Plan; Housing SPG; Housing Strategy; Affordable Housing and Viability SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context, draft SPG; Draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration;

- **Urban design**  
  London Plan; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context, draft SPG; Housing SPG; London Housing Design Guide; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG.

- **Inclusive design**  
  London Plan; Accessible London: Achieving an inclusive environment SPG;

- **Sustainable development**  
  London Plan; Sustainable Design and Construction SPG; Mayor’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; Mayor’s Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy; Mayor’s Water Strategy;

- **Transport**  
  London Plan; Mayor’s Transport Strategy; Mayor’s draft Transport strategy;

14 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan in force for the area comprises:

- The London Plan 2016 (Consolidated with Alterations since 2011);
- Barking and Dagenham Core Strategy (2010);
- Barking and Dagenham Borough Wide Development Policies DPD (2011);
- Barking and Dagenham Site Specific Allocations DPD (2010);
- Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD (2011);
- Barking and Dagenham Proposals Map DPD (2012).


**Principle of development**

16 The application site has no specific land use identified in the London Plan. Policy 3.4 of the Plan (Optimising housing potential) strongly supports new housing that takes appropriate account of local character, context and public transport capacity. Policy 3.3 of the Plan (Increasing housing supply) recognises London’s pressing need for more homes and looks to secure a minimum of 42,000 net additional homes a year to 2025 to enhance London’s environment, improve housing choice and affordability and provide better quality accommodation for Londoners. Barking and Dagenham’s share of this target is 1,236 new homes a year.

17 The proposed delivery of around 675 new homes is therefore strongly supported subject to the strategic planning issues identified below being satisfactorily addressed. The proposal also includes new community and commercial floorspace. This is supported by London Plan Policy 3.7 (Large residential developments) as it will provide additional employment opportunities and help create more distinctive and attractive neighbourhoods.
The Council was awarded GLA Housing Zone funding towards land assembly and to help it fund the buyback of up to 80 private leasehold units in April 2017 (DD2101).

Estate renewal

The Mayor has confirmed that one of his strong priorities is to ensure that residents on London’s estates are offered a fair deal when regeneration proposals are developed and for all existing affordable housing to be protected or reprovided. These priorities are set out in his December 2016 draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration. The GLA therefore expects estate renewal planning applications to demonstrate how these principles have been followed and that the following key requirements are met:

- The rationale for estate regeneration is clearly stated, along with the aims and objectives of the development.
- There must be an extensive and responsive consultation process with tenants and leaseholders.
- Regeneration must ensure a fair deal for tenants and leaseholders, including no loss of social housing and appropriate compensation provided.

Barking and Dagenham Council has been working to improve and renew the Gascoigne Estate for several years with its Cabinet approving a leasehold and tenant decanting process in January 2015. The Council’s specific plans for this element of the project were then discussed with tenants and leaseholders, and a stakeholder group consisting of representatives of residents, the business community and schools was established. A series of consultation events were also held to inform the planning application.

The application material includes a Resident and Community Consultation Report that provides details of these events and processes, and states that existing tenants will be able to bid for new Council tenancies in accordance with their assessed bedroom requirements and will receive decent compensation payments. This report confirms that the Council will offer leaseholders the full market value for their property as well as compensation payments and shared ownership options. The report also confirms that the Council has put arrangements in place to provide support for more vulnerable leaseholders and tenants.

These arrangements are welcomed and accord with the broad objectives of the Mayor’s draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration. The applicant must though confirm whether existing tenants will be offered a right to return to the estate should they wish to, what would happen if their rehousing bids are unsuccessful, and whether tenancy and rental terms would be the same or similar to their existing arrangements.

Housing and affordable housing

Reprovision of existing housing

The application proposes the following indicative mix of housing tenures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Existing Units</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Proposed Units</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>% of AH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Rented</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leasehold</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td>553%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Rented</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>850%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The existing 93 social rented units would be numerically reprovided in accordance with London Plan Policy 3.14 (Existing Housing), the Mayor’s draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration (paragraph 9), and his Affordable Housing and Viability SPG (paragraph 2.66). However, existing and proposed social rented floorspaces and habitable room details must be provided as required by London Plan Policy 3.14 (Existing housing) to ensure the proposals would deliver an equivalent level of affordable housing.

**Affordability**

The replacement social rented units will be set at Target Rent levels and the proposed affordable rented units let at up to 80% of the local market rent through ‘Barking and Dagenham Reside’ - a company set up by the Council for this purpose. The intermediate units would be provided in the form of ‘Low-cost Home Ownership’, with the smaller units being available for households with annual incomes between £18,100 and £66,000, rising to £80,000 for homes with more than two bedrooms.

These thresholds and approaches accord with London Plan Policy 3.10 (Definition of affordable housing) and the affordability criteria set out in the Mayor’s 2017 Annual Monitoring Report. Income levels for the affordable housing units should though be clarified, the 80% of market rents for the affordable rented units confirmed as gross (i.e. including applicable service charges), and eligibility criteria robustly secured through an appropriately worded S106 planning agreement.

**Maximising affordable housing**

The applicant is currently targeting 35% affordable housing across the application site which would mean that 20% of the additional units would be affordable. As set out above, the London Plan requires all existing affordable housing to be reprovided on a like for like basis in estate regeneration proposals and once this has been achieved, the maximum reasonable level of additional affordable housing then secured. The Mayor’s Affordable Housing and Viability SPG confirms that estate regeneration schemes must follow the Viability Tested Route to achieve this and viability material has therefore been requested. This must be provided to enable a robust interrogation by GLA officers to ensure the maximum level of affordable housing would be provided. Early and late stage reviews must also be secured to ensure additional delivery should future values and costs permit.

**Housing mix**

London Plan Policy 3.8 (Housing choice) looks to achieve a mix of unit sizes within all new housing, and accords particular priority to affordable family housing, which the Mayor defines as homes with 3 or more bedrooms. One hundred and seven, three bedroom (5 person) units are proposed, which equates to around 12% of the total proposed housing. However, no information on the tenures of the family accommodation, nor the mix of the intermediate or reprovided social rented units has been provided. A detailed schedule of unit mix by tenure must therefore be provided.

**Provision of C2 housing**

The application includes provision for C2 (Assisted living/care home) housing on certain plots, (rather than C3 [Dwelling house] housing), but no detail is provided. The applicant must clarify whether and in what circumstances this form of housing might be provided and what impact this might have on its approach to affordable housing.
Urban design

30 The application has been submitted in outline form and includes an illustrative masterplan together with a more detailed design code which set out how each element of the development forms part of a coherent whole. Specifically, it includes 7 parameter plans covering such matters as building heights, land uses, vehicle and pedestrian circulation and amenity spaces. Building heights would vary from 2 to 15 storeys depending on context and detailed relationships with retained and new buildings. Blocks have been laid out to maximise dual aspect and to minimise single aspect north facing units.

31 GLA officers note and accept that the existing low-rise character of the surrounding estate places constraints on building heights, but the proposed massing strategy responds well to this context with variations in height adding visual interest to the existing and emerging streetscape which would not harm the setting of the Abbey Road Conservation Area. The proposed approach to urban design is therefore supported and would lead to an improved street pattern and clearly defined public and private spaces that would integrate well into the wider area. Final design quality will be dependent on detailed submissions which should ensure that all ground floor units would have individual entrances wherever possible and ensure ground floor residential privacy, for example by stacked maisonettes, maximising the number of through units and avoiding ground floor street fronting bedrooms.

Housing quality

32 London Plan Policy 3.5 (Quality and design of housing developments) promotes quality, with further guidance provided by the Mayor’s Housing SPG. Whilst in outline form, the applicant has confirmed that all future reserved matters applications will comply with the Mayor’s housing design standards. This is welcomed and should be secured by appropriate planning conditions within any planning consent.

Children’s play space

33 Policy 3.6 of the London Plan (Children and young people’s play and informal recreation facilities) requires new housing to include play space based on expected child populations. The applicant has identified a number of existing play areas within the Gascoigne Estate that it would improve as part of this application as well as new play spaces specifically designed for 5-11 and 12+ children. This would result in 2,350 sq.m. of dedicated play. This quantum of playspace should however be assessed using the methodology within the Mayor’s supplementary planning guidance ‘Providing for Children and Young People’s Play and Informal Recreation” once the scheme’s unit sizes and tenures have been confirmed.

Inclusive design

34 In accordance with London Plan Policy 3.8 (Housing choice), 90% of the new residential units would meet M4(2) standards and 10% would be wheelchair accessible or adaptable and comply with M4(3) standards. Provision of the wheelchair accessible or adaptable units across all dwelling types, tenures and storeys should be secured.

Sustainable development

Energy

35 The development is expected to achieve a 40% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions compared to a 2013 Building regulations baseline. However, sample TER and DER worksheets should be provided to verify carbon savings. As major residential developments are required to meet the zero-carbon target, the applicant should ensure that the remaining regulated CO₂ emissions are mitigated through a contribution to the borough’s offset fund.
The applicant should also provide the route of the proposed heat network as well as a commitment to connect all phases and apartments into it. Further details of the energy centre’s floor area, internal layout, location and CHP outputs should also be provided to demonstrate full compliance with GLA energy policies.

**Flood risk**

A significant portion of the southern part of the site falls within Flood Zone 3. The applicant therefore submitted a Flood Risk assessment that identifies potential flood risk and proposes a series of measures to address and mitigate these risks including sustainable urban drainage measures such as rainwater harvesting, green roofs, storage and attenuation measures. This approach is welcomed and accords with GLA officer pre-application advice and complies with London Plan Policy 5.13 (Sustainable drainage) and should be secured by appropriately worded planning conditions should permission be granted.

**Transport**

Local highway or public transport capacity will not be significantly impacted by the proposals and the application proposes safeguarding land to help deliver a two-way bus route along The Shaftesburys, which would divert an existing bus route from St Paul’s Road. Whilst TfL support this principle, a number of technical matters are unresolved. For example, the application does not contain a commitment for The Shaftesburys to be bus only, or for through traffic to be prohibited, notwithstanding that this would be key to delivering wider bus connectivity. A 6.5 metre minimum width bus gate should therefore be provided in the vicinity of Abbey Road and carriageway and footway widths should allow for two-way working. The locations and delivery of additional bus stops and delivery of the proposed highway works should be confirmed.

Cycle parking does not currently comply with London Plan minimum standards and the applicant should confirm that sufficient spaces will be provided for the maximum number of dwellings the application proposes. These spaces should be provided within safe, secure, covered and overlooked areas and include 5% alternative provision for non-standard bikes such as tricycles, adaptable cycles and cargo bikes. Finally, the number of standard and Blue Badge car parking spaces needs to be clarified with at least 85 Blue Badge spaces provided to ensure full compliance with the London Plan. A full travel plan should also be secured, enforced, monitored and reviewed as part of any S106 planning agreement, with a Delivery and Servicing Plan (DSP) and Construction and Logistics Plan (CLP) secured via planning conditions.

**Local planning authority’s position**

Council Planning officers support the application’s objectives and general approach but are assessing the detailed policy issues set out in this report before it is reported to their Planning Committee in autumn 2017.

**Legal considerations**

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.
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

There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

London Plan policies on mix of uses, estate regeneration, housing and affordable housing, urban design, inclusive design, energy, flood risk and transport are relevant to this application. The application does not yet fully comply with the London Plan as set out below:

- **Principle of development and mix of uses**: The redevelopment of the estate and the introduction of additional housing and none residential uses is strongly supported.

- **Estate regeneration**: Whilst the reprovision of existing social rented units is supported, the applicant must provide full details of habitable rooms and floorspaces, the unit mix of existing and reprovided housing and its tenant rehousing proposals.

- **Housing and affordable housing**: The applicant must provide viability material to show its proposals would maximise affordable housing. This will be rigorously interrogated by GLA officers. Early and late stage review clauses must also be secured. The applicant should also clarify whether and in what circumstances C2 (Assisted living/care home) housing might be provided and what impact this would have on its approach to affordable housing.

- **Urban design and inclusive design**: The approach to urban design and inclusive design is generally supported, but further information on children’s play space should be provided.

- **Climate change**: The proposals are broadly acceptable but predicted carbon savings need to be verified. The route of the proposed heat network, a commitment to connect all phases and apartments into it, and further details of the energy centre are also required. The approach to flood risk is supported.

- **Transport**: The development is generally acceptable from a strategic transport perspective; however a number of technical matters are unresolved. For example, the application does not guarantee The Shaftesburys would be bus only, a bus gate is required in the vicinity of Abbey Road, and the location and delivery of additional bus stops and proposed highway works needs to be confirmed. Further information is also required on car and cycle parking.

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