**Strategic planning application stage 1 referral**


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**The proposal**

Outline planning permission for comprehensive redevelopment of the estate comprising new buildings ranging from one to ten storeys, to provide up to 1,570 residential units, up to 9,900 sq.m. of commercial and community floorspace, together with public realm and highways works.

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**The applicant**

The applicant is Clarion Housing Group and the architect is PRP.

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**Strategic issues summary**

**Estate regeneration and affordable housing:** The estate regeneration scheme would result in no net loss of affordable housing with replacement homes being provided on an equivalent basis. The applicant’s viability assessment will be robustly interrogated to ensure the maximum amount of additional affordable housing is provided. Review mechanisms in accordance with the draft London Plan and the Mayor’s Affordable Housing and Viability SPG will be secured (paragraphs 19-27 and 31-37).

**Commercial and community uses:** The provision of flexible retail, commercial and community uses, including incubator and SME workspace is supported. The re-provided community facility must be secured in accordance with Policy S1 of the draft London Plan (paragraphs 28-30).

**Urban design and heritage:** The overall design strategy is supported and the plans and design code demonstrate that a suitably high residential quality, amenity provision and public realm would be achieved. The scheme would preserve existing heritage assets. Robust conditions are required to secure the design commitments made by the applicant (paragraphs 45-57).

**Climate change:** Further information is required including scope for further carbon savings, before an appropriate contribution to the Council’s carbon offset fund is secured. Details of the drainage strategy also need to be secured by condition (paragraphs 61-64).

**Transport:** Further information is required in relation to junction improvement works, trip generation assessment and cycling infrastructure improvements. A number of mitigation measures, conditions and obligations are also required (paragraphs 65-73).

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**Recommendation**

That Merton Council be advised while the principle of the application is supported, the application does not comply with the London Plan and draft London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 78. However, the resolution of those issues could lead to the application becoming compliant with the London Plan and draft London Plan.
Context

1. On 28 November 2017 the Mayor of London received documents from Merton 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 must 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:
   - 1A: Development which comprises or includes the provision of more than 150 houses, flats, or houses and flats;
   - 1B: Development (other than development which only comprises the provision of houses, flats, or houses and flats) which comprises or includes the erection of a building or buildings — (c) outside Central London and with a total floorspace of more than 15,000 square metres;
   - 1C: Development which comprises or includes the erection of a building (c) more than 30 metres high and is outside the City of London.

3. Once Merton 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.

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

Site description

5. The 7.48 hectare High Path development site is located in South Wimbledon and is currently occupied by an estate containing 608 homes built from the late 1950s to the early 1980s and comprising three 12-storey residential towers, 2 to 4-storey low rise blocks, some houses and some sheltered flats. A small convenience store and church are also located within the site. There are approximately 422 parking spaces provided in surface parking courts and on the internal estate roads.

6. The housing mix on the existing estate comprises the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type / Tenure</th>
<th>1 bed</th>
<th>2 bed</th>
<th>3 bed</th>
<th>4 bed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable (rented)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>197</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>608</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: existing housing mix

7. The site is bounded to the north by Merton High Street, to the west by Morden Road, to the east by Abbey Road and to the south by High Path, beyond which is Merton Abbey Primary School, High Path Community Resource Centre, and two churches. The Old Lamp Works site, an existing warehouse building is adjacent to the site to the south east, and forms part of Phase 1 of the development of the High Path masterplan, which has already been approved.
The site is not in a conservation area but South Wimbledon Underground station which is located in the north west corner of the estate is Grade II listed. St John the Divine Church and Nelson’s Arms Public House, respectively north and south of the site are both locally listed buildings.

In terms of transport, the A24 Merantun Way forms part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) and the A238 Merton High Street is part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN). In addition to South Wimbledon Northern Line Underground Station, the site is served by Morden Road tram stop, located approximately 700 metres south of the estate, and a number of bus routes which run along Morden Road and Merton High Street. The estate therefore has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) range of 4 to 6a, on a scale of 1 to 6 where 6 is the most accessible.

**Details of the proposal**

Outline planning permission is sought for the residential-led mixed use regeneration of High Path estate. Parameter plans and design coding principles have been provided to inform the detailed layout, scale, access, appearance and landscaping proposals, which will be submitted to Merton Council in due course as reserved matters applications.

In total, the scheme proposes that 608 existing residential units are demolished and replaced by up to 1,570 new units in a series of buildings ranging from one to ten storeys, to contain a range of unit types including mixed use blocks, apartment buildings, mansion blocks, townhouses, mews houses, and mansion blocks delivered in seven phases. For assessment purposes, the applicant has modelled an illustrative scheme that includes 1,527 units and a maximum indicative mix has also been provided as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type / Tenure</th>
<th>Studio</th>
<th>1 bed</th>
<th>2 bed</th>
<th>3 bed</th>
<th>4 bed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Rented</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>163</strong></td>
<td><strong>552</strong></td>
<td><strong>686</strong></td>
<td><strong>160</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,570</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Illustrative housing mix (maximum number of units and tenure)

The applicant is proposing that the private tenure could include private rent or private sale units. For assessment purposes 378 PRS units are suggested. The private units also include 79 replacement homes.

Up to 9,900 sq.m. of flexible commercial and community uses is proposed, with the following floor spaces indicated: up to 2,700 sq.m. Use Class A1/A2/A3/A4; up to 4,100 sq.m. of B1 (office); up to 1,250 sq.m. community floor space and 600 sq.m. D2 (gym). The scheme also includes a new neighbourhood park of approximately 7,500 sq.m., a new cycle route link, and 269 car parking spaces provided on-street or within podium areas. Other highways, utilities and landscaping works are also proposed.

The redevelopment of the site is part of a wider estate renewal programme which started in 2010 with the transfer of the Council’s housing stock to Circle Housing. Circle Housing has subsequently merged with Affinity Sutton to become Clarion Housing, which is the applicant for the scheme, along with two other housing estates within Merton: Eastfields and Ravensbury, also currently pending consideration (ref: D&P/3852c and 3852e). The stock transfer required the applicant to bring all properties up to Decent Homes standard but following an analysis of the existing estate and required works to improve them, the decision was made to replace all of the homes at High Path instead.
Case history

15 The only planning history of relevance relates to Phase 1 of the estate, where planning permission has been granted for demolition of the Old Lamp Works industrial building and a series of domestic garages, and redevelopment to provide 134 residential units in flatted buildings and houses. This scheme has been developed in order to provide replacement housing for existing residents on the High Path Estate as a pre-cursor to the wider estate renewal programme and does not involve the loss of any existing homes. The Mayor considered this application at Stage 2 in April 2017 and was content for the Council to determine the case itself. The scheme included 59% affordable housing (80 units), all of which were affordable/rented units (GLA ref: D&P/3852a). When reporting, it was highlighted that the affordable units would be utilised in the decanting of the estate, to assist in the wider estate regeneration programme. It was noted that the financial viability of that application would be linked and robustly reviewed through the wider masterplan for High Path. The outline application boundary includes some parts of the Phase 1 site in order to integrate the two schemes.

16 The current scheme has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussions with GLA and Council officers over a two-year period, with general support given to the design principles and approach being taken to the estate renewal.

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

17 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan in force for the area is the 2011 Merton Core Planning Strategy, the 2014 Merton Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Map, and the 2016 London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2011).

18 The following are relevant material considerations:

- The National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance;
- Draft Estates Local Plan for Eastfields, High Path and Ravensbury (2017 submission version);
- Draft London Plan (consultation draft December 2017);
- Housing and affordable housing | London Plan; Housing SPG; Housing Strategy; Affordable Housing & Viability SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG; Draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration
- Urban design | London Plan; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG; Housing SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation 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; the Mayor’s Transport Strategy;
Principle of development

Estate regeneration

19 The Mayor is committed to ensuring the successful regeneration of London’s housing estates, ensuring a fair deal for residents and that affordable housing is protected. These priorities are set out in detail in the Mayor’s Homes for Londoners: draft good practice guidance to estate regeneration; key requirements are that estate regeneration proposals ensure no loss of affordable housing, that full consultation takes place with existing residents and appropriate compensation offered.

20 London Plan Policy 3.14, draft London Plan Policy H10, and the Mayor’s Affordable Housing and Viability SPG also provide guidance on estate regeneration and make it clear that the Mayor expects existing affordable housing to be replaced on a like-for-like basis, meaning that, for example, homes at social rent levels should be replaced with homes based on social rent levels.

21 Merton Council has produced an Estates Local Plan for High Path, Eastfields and Ravensbury Estates and this has been subject to independent examination, with consultation on the main modifications ending in November 2017. The document sets out the Council’s vision for a linked regeneration programme across the three estate over the next 10-15 years, which collectively are financially viable. Amongst a number of site specific policies, it requires that the existing number of affordable homes are re-provided across the three estates.

22 The existing and proposed affordable provision for High Path estate is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affordable housing provision</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Habitable rooms</th>
<th>Floor space sq.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing affordable housing</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>20,925*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 affordable (approved)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>7,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed affordable housing (maximum)</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>23,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total proposed housing</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>30,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplift</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+71</td>
<td>+9,958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: existing and proposed affordable provision
*based on sample survey data

23 As noted, the initial Phase 1 scheme brings forward 80 new affordable units, which when combined with the current application, would result in no net loss of affordable units across the estate regeneration scheme, with a net gain of 71 affordable habitable rooms and also an uplift in affordable floor space. When considering the Phase 1 planning application, it was noted that the 80 affordable units would be utilised for the decant of the estate and that as such, the schemes are intrinsically linked in terms of phasing and financial viability. This is therefore reflected in the financial viability appraisal that has been submitted with this application, which includes the Phase 1 units. The section 106 agreement for Phase 1 also links the two schemes. As such, it is appropriate to include Phase 1 and the 80 affordable units as contributing towards the estate regeneration scheme for the purposes of assessing the affordable housing provision, with any value to be derived from the Phase 1 proposal, noting it is a mixed-tenure scheme on a vacant site, being captured in full through the overarching viability, which is subject to robust review by GLA officers.
24 In terms of existing rent levels, 84% of current tenancies are on a social rent basis, with the balance comprising affordable rent tenancies set at 62.5% of market rent. The applicant has confirmed that all existing tenants would return to new homes on a like for like tenancy, and that in instances where a social rent property may become void in the future, units will be converted to affordable rent based on London Affordable Rent levels. Therefore, the scheme accords with strategic policy and guidance, as set out in Policy H10 of the draft London Plan, with existing affordable housing floor space replaced on an equivalent basis, with rent levels based on that which has been lost. The baseline provision, that ensures no net loss, including details of rent levels, must be secured in the section 106 agreement.

25 The applicant has provided an assessment of the scheme against the Mayor’s estate regeneration guidance, setting out the aims and objectives for the programme, the consultation process and the deal for tenants and leaseholders. From the information provided, the applicant has reviewed all options including repair and refurbishment, before taking the decision to wholly redevelop the estate, noting that there are a high number of occupants living in unsuitable accommodation, including overcrowding. A detailed statement has been provided of community involvement that has taken place with residents, which has included a number of stakeholder sessions, meetings, exhibitions and newsletters. It has also provided details of the residents offer. The Council and applicant have also signed an agreement setting out ten commitments, which form the basis of the project to ensure residents remain central to decision-making for the regeneration of the three estates.

26 In the case of High Path, seven phases of redevelopment are proposed in an effort to ensure that all existing residents can be offered a new home to move directly into rather than decant to temporary housing, thereby minimising disruption. The consultation process on the proposals date back to 2014 when the decision to redevelop the estate (rather than undertake improvements in accordance with the stock transfer) were being formulated. It is clear from the documentation that the applicant has sought to engage with residents, with extra support offered to vulnerable or protected groups. Details of consultation responses to the planning application will also be reviewed at Stage 2.

27 London Plan Policy 3.3 and draft London Plan Policy H1 seeks to increase the supply of housing in the capital, setting Merton Council an annual target in the draft Plan of 671 homes per annum. The principle of increased and optimised housing delivery in this accessible location is welcomed, and the introduction of new homes, in a range of unit sizes and tenures, will assist in addressing local housing needs, and improving the social, economic and physical environment in accordance with London Plan Policy 3.9 and draft London Plan Policy H10.

**Non-residential uses**

28 The current scheme sees the introduction of 9,900 sq.m. of non-residential floorspace fronting Merton High Street and Morden Road, adjacent to South Wimbledon Station. This would comprise retail, office, community and leisure uses, representing a significant net gain compared to the existing estate which contains a small local shop and church hall. The draft Estates Local Plan states that the primary use for the site will be residential but the provision of such uses may contribute to activation of the street, meet the day to day needs of the local population and to support employment for local residents.

29 The applicant has undertaken a commercial floor space assessment, given the amount of retail and leisure floorspace that is proposed outside of an existing centre. This concludes that the retail provision would not adversely impact upon other nearby town centres, and would be focused on meeting the additional demand resulting from the increased population at the estate. The office provision is intended to meet small scale operator demand, providing initial incubator space and larger ‘move-on’ space to contribute to the range of employment in the
borough, for which the applicant identifies a deficiency. Whilst outside of an office location, overall, the commercial offer is supported in strategic planning terms as it would meet local needs in accordance with London Plan Policies 4.2 and 4.8, and draft London Plan Policies E1, E2 and E3, which seek to bring forward lower-cost workspace.

30 The community uses proposed would include a re-provided community hall (360 sq.m.) in addition to a further 900 sq.m. of community floor space. The provision of an increased amount of community floor space is strongly supported, in accordance with London Plan Policy 3.16 and draft London Plan Policy S1 in order to meet the needs of the existing and increased population and this minimum provision should be secured by condition. Given the outline nature of the application, the Council should secure appropriate conditions in relation to the phasing and delivery of the re-provided community hall (including the minimum floorspace requirements), and rental/use arrangements, so as to ensure that users continue to have access to this important local resource.

**Housing**

**Affordable housing**

31 Based on the maximum parameters plan, the scheme proposes the following number of units per tenure and percentages based on habitable rooms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type / Tenure</th>
<th>Number of units</th>
<th>Number of habitable rooms</th>
<th>% habitable rooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable rent</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement homes</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>890</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sale</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,570</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,010</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: proposed estate renewal programme – illustrative maximum number of units

32 As noted, the estate renewal programme meets the expectations of the London Plan, draft London Plan, draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration and Affordable Housing and Viability SPG, with existing affordable housing replaced on an equivalent basis in terms of units, floor space, habitable rooms, and with rents at levels based on that which has been lost. The details of the rent levels must be set out in the s106 agreement and the affordable housing secured in perpetuity; a draft of the agreement should be shared with GLA officers in advance of the Stage 2 referral process.

33 In addition to the re-provided affordable homes and 80 units from Phase 1, the scheme also includes 79 re-provided private units and up to 1,214 market homes, which would assist in cross-subsidising the affordable provision as well as helping to deliver a mixed and inclusive community. The Mayor’s Housing SPG makes clear that, as part of estate renewal proposals, the approach of introducing additional development above and beyond the quantum of the existing estate may be required in order to fund its redevelopment. Whilst it is acknowledged within the SPG that this additional development need not provide the usual proportion of affordable housing, proposals are still required to demonstrate that the maximum amount of additional affordable housing is being provided, in accordance with London Plan Policy 3.12. As set out in draft London Plan Policy H11 and the Affordable Housing and Viability SPG all estate renewal programmes are required to follow the Viability Tested Route.
In line with this guidance, the applicant has submitted a viability appraisal to the Council and GLA officers to support its current offer, which proposes 19.7% affordable housing (based on habitable rooms) overall and including the re-provided affordable homes, all of which would comprise wholly affordable rented accommodation. When including the 80 affordable units from Phase 1, the overall affordable provision amounts to 23% (based on a total of 1,704 units/4,433 habitable rooms). Three separate appraisals have been provided for the estates, but the applicant has noted that there is a significant variance in financial performance of the three estates, with High Path having the potential to achieve much stronger value from private tenures due to its location and local market demand. The High Path scheme includes an element of private rented accommodation and this is accounted for in the viability appraisal, as are the 134 units from Phase 1. These elements will be carefully assessed as part of the independent review to establish their contribution towards the viability of the scheme.

GLA officers are working with the Council to robustly scrutinise the applicant’s viability appraisals for the estates and following the conclusion of the viability review process, GLA officers will confirm the maximum amount of additional affordable housing at the Mayor’s decision-making stage. In line with the Affordable Housing and Viability SPG, the scheme must be subject to an early review mechanism (if implementation is delayed) as well as a near end review (once 75% of the private market units are sold). The applicant has indicated that any identified uplift secured through reviews will be directed towards shared ownership across the wider estate renewal programme, directed towards High Path or Eastfields, given the amount of delivery already proposed at Ravensbury. A mid-point review may also be appropriate given the long-term phased nature of the programme. Given that all of the affordable housing proposed across the three estates comprises low cost rented homes, the introduction of shared ownership only, in the event that the provision of additional affordable housing proves viable under the necessary review mechanisms, would be strongly supported. The full details should be secured in the section 106 agreement.

In terms of grant, the applicant has confirmed that part of their allocation from the GLA affordable housing programme would be channelled into the project; the viability appraisal allows for a grant allocation of £60,000 per affordable rented unit. The total grant funding allocated to the High Path project is £21.42 million.

In the interests of transparency, the Council is reminded that draft London Plan Policy H6 and the Mayor’s Affordable Housing and Viability SPG strongly encourages local planning authorities (LPAs) to publish any submitted financial viability assessment, and any associated independent viability review. The Mayor’s SPG makes clear that, where this information is not published by an LPA, the Mayor reserves the right to publish it himself.

**Build to Rent**

The provision of Build to Rent is supported by London Plan Policy 3.8 and Policy H13 of the draft London Plan, which recognises the contribution of Build to Rent in addressing housing needs and increasing delivery. Policy H13 of the draft London Plan sets out the requirements for this tenure, which must be secured in the section 106 agreement, including a robust covenant of at least 15 years and a clawback mechanism for if units are sold. These details should be set out in the draft section 106 agreement and shared with GLA officers prior to the Stage 2 referral.
Housing choice

39 London Plan Policy 3.8 encourages a full range of housing choice. Draft London Plan Policy H12 recognises that central or urban sites may be most appropriate for schemes with a significant number of one and two beds and that the number of family sized affordable homes provided should be driven by local and strategic need and should recognise that some families live in units smaller than three bedrooms.

40 The applicant has indicated an illustrative mix and range of unit sizes for each tenure, with the final mix to be determined at Reserved Matters stage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mix</th>
<th>Studio</th>
<th>1 bed</th>
<th>2 bed</th>
<th>3 bed +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illustrative</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% range for approval (private)</td>
<td>0-15%</td>
<td>25-45%</td>
<td>30-50%</td>
<td>5-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% range for approval (affordable rented)</td>
<td>0-10%</td>
<td>30-50%</td>
<td>30-50%</td>
<td>10-30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: proposed housing mix

41 The scheme proposes a range of unit sizes, predominantly focussed on one and two bed units, with a higher proportion of affordable family units. Replacement homes have been designed to ensure that existing residents are provided with replacement housing that meets their specific needs. Given the proximity to South Wimbledon station and central/urban character, the suggested mix is acceptable. Given the outline nature of the application, the baseline unit size should be secured as part of any planning permission and the future provision should be based on discussions with Merton Council at Reserved Matters stage to reflect identified local housing demand.

Children’s playspace

42 London Plan Policy 3.6 and draft London Plan Policy S4 require development proposals to make provisions for play and informal recreation based on the expected child population generated by the scheme. The Mayor’s Play and Recreation SPG and draft London Plan Policy expect a minimum of 10 sq.m per child to be provided in new developments.

43 Using the methodology set out in the Mayor’s Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal recreation SPG, when including Phase 1, the scheme would be expected to accommodate approximately 466 children, equating to a minimum playspace provision of approximately 4,600 sq.m.

44 The existing estate lacks any meaningful play space at present and a key objective of the scheme has been to incorporate a new neighbourhood park of over 7,700 sq.m. This would be available for use by all age groups, with a dedicated area of 1,750 sq.m. for children’s play equipment. In addition, the communal areas and courtyard areas would provide an additional 800 sq.m. of doorstop playable space. Overall, with the provision of the new park, play and amenity areas, there would be sufficient play provision to meet the needs of the children across the estate. There are also several parks and recreation grounds within a reasonable proximity of the site for use by older children. Subject to minimum areas, phased implementation to align with housing delivery, and design commitments within the design code being secured by condition, the play strategy is supported in accordance with London Plan Policy 3.6 and draft London Plan Policy S4.
Urban design

45   Good design is central to all objectives of the London Plan and draft London Plan. London Plan Policy 3.4 and draft London Plan Policy D6 seek to optimise the potential of sites, having regard to local context, design principles, public transport accessibility and capacity of existing and future transport services. Policy 7.8 of the London Plan sets out that development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail. This is reinforced in Policy HC1 of the draft London Plan, which expects development proposals to be sympathetic to heritage assets and conserve their significance.

46   The scheme has been the subject of significant discussions with the Council’s planning team and its Design Review Panel, through the community engagement programme and pre-application discussions with GLA officers over a two-year period. The applicant has clearly set out how it has sought to respond to the points raised through the design review process. The applicant has also been closely involved in the development of the Estates Local Plan, which informs the design principles for the estate renewal. The applicant has prepared design codes that provide the design principles for the scheme, and which will guide the detailed design at Reserved Matters stage.

Density

47   London Plan Policy 3.4 and draft London Plan Policy D6 seek to optimise the potential of sites, having regard to local context, design principles, public transport accessibility and capacity of existing and future transport services. Draft Policy D6 expands upon the previous policy, requiring management plans for schemes that exceed specified density thresholds and requiring the submission of several measures of density alongside a planning application to assess, monitor and compare development proposals across London.

48   The density on the Estate currently stands at approximately 81 units per hectare (based on 608 units over the site area, inclusive of Phase 1). The resultant density of the scheme would increase to 249 units per hectare, factoring in the new neighbourhood park. Overall, the proposals would deliver good design and residential standards and successfully accommodate an increased density, optimising the potential of the site and delivering essential new affordable homes in an appropriate scale of development.

Design, layout and scale

49   The principles of the masterplan in terms of the street-based approach that has been taken, arranged around perimeter blocks, and a central neighbourhood park are supported. This creates well-defined streets and spaces that aligned to address the existing street network and provide potential for animation and consistent active frontages and natural surveillance onto the public realm through the ground floor commercial uses, front doors to ground floor residential units and residential cores. The parameter plans have been designed to allow flexibility to incorporate the new potential tram link along Morden Road, which is welcomed.

50   The scheme includes a range of buildings with heights of up to ten storeys, with the taller elements along the wider traffic routes of Merton High Street, close to South Wimbledon Station, and along the length of the proposed green link. Whilst taller than the surrounding area, the buildings are lower than the existing 12 storey towers on the site. This increased density and scale in a central location in close proximity to a station is supported in principle in accordance with draft London Plan Policy D6.
The design and access statement sets out details of the typologies of the different building types, which include park mansions, stacked maisonettes, townhouses, mews house and blocks of flats. Indicative images setting out architectural influences that would guide the future Reserved Matters applications are also provided, suggesting a simple palette of materials comprising brick detailing, projecting bays and inset balconies. The design code sets out a series of design guidelines for fenestration, entrances and balconies for each of the building typologies and which ensure the scheme is tenure blind. Given the outline nature of the scheme and length of build out, detailed conditions will need to be secured to ensure that the high-quality finishes and appearance suggested in the indicative images are reflected at build out stage.

Noting the significant pre-application discussions that have taken place, and the objectives set out in the Estates Local Plan, the overall design approach, scale, layout and density is supported, improving on the existing poor connectivity and permeability of the estate in well-designed new buildings that respond to the surrounding context.

Finally, in accordance with Policy D11 (Fire Safety) of the draft London Plan, the Council should secure an Informative requiring the submission of a fire statement, produced by a third party suitable qualified assessor, to be submitted to and agreed with the London Fire Brigade.

Heritage

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory duties for dealing with heritage assets in planning decisions; in relation to listed buildings, all planning decisions should “have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.” Policy HC1 ‘Heritage conservation and growth’ of the draft London Plan, like London Plan Policy 7.8, states that development should conserve heritage assets and avoid harm. The NPPF states that when considering the impact of the proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation; significance can be harm or loss through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. In relation to locally listed buildings, the NPPF states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Noting that South Wimbledon Station is Grade II listed, the applicant has undertaken a townscape, heritage and visual impact assessment, which demonstrates that whilst the proposed buildings would rise up behind the station as a backdrop, the station would remain the focal point in townscape views and its architectural merit would be conserved. In conclusion, GLA officers consider that the proposal would not harm the setting of the listed building. The scale and massing responds positively to the varying character of the surrounding area, including the Victorian terraces to the east, the locally listed church to the south-west and locally listed Nelsons Public House to the north-east in particular, and their settings would be preserved.

Residential quality

London Plan Policy 3.5 requires housing developments to be of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context, with further guidance provided in the Mayor’s Housing SPG. Draft London Plan Policy H4 sets out the minimum standards that new development should meet and the qualitative aspects that should be considered in the design of any residential development.
57 The design code sets out a number of key principles that would apply to the residential accommodation, with commitments to ensuring that all dwellings meet or exceed the minimum space standards as set out in the London Plan, draft London Plan and Housing SPG as well as residential design quality benchmarks. This includes provision of private amenity spaces of minimum size, provision of dual aspect units, avoidance of single aspect north facing units, minimum floor to ceiling heights, units per core, and lift arrangements. These commitments and minimum requirements to accord with policy (including minimum proportion of dual aspect units, minimum floor to ceiling heights, and maximum units per core) should be secured by detailed condition.

58 The applicant has sought some flexibility in relation to the PRS element of the scheme in relation to the number of units per core and per floor and the number of single aspect homes. Whilst some flexibility is accepted, in accordance with draft London Plan Policy D4, all schemes are expected to avoid the provision of single aspect dwellings and as such, the design code should be updated to ensure that single aspect dwellings are avoided.

**Inclusive design**

59 The applicant has committed to ensuring equal and convenient access throughout the development, which is reflected in the design code with commitments to provide safe and level surfaces and entrances throughout the scheme, including the commercial and community uses. The provision of new public spaces and legible connections through the estate is welcomed in particular.

60 The applicant has committed to a 10% provision of wheelchair accessible/adaptable homes, although flexibility has been sought in relation to the provision of lifts in flatted blocks of four storeys or less. Draft London Plan Policy D5 recognises that there are instances where the provision of a lift to dwelling entrances may not be achievable and some flexibility is allowed for, including potential implications from on-going maintenance costs. A clear strategy should be set out through planning obligation in relation to this aspect, to ensure that such flexibility only applied in exceptional circumstances based on evidence and in accordance with the draft London Plan.

61 The applicant has also indicated that sufficient Blue Badge parking spaces would be provided to allow for a 1:1 provision of spaces to units. The minimum provision (157 spaces) should be secured by condition, to be demonstrated on plan and through a parking management plan, with at least 3% provided from the outset to accord with draft London Plan Policy T6.1.

**Sustainable development**

**Energy strategy**

62 In accordance with the principles of London Plan Policy 5.2 and Policy SI2 of the draft London Plan, the applicant has submitted an energy statement, setting out how the development proposes to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and generally the principles applied are appropriate with robust information provided. The scheme would achieve carbon savings of 35% for the non-domestic uses, which meets the targets in the London Plan; at 36%, the domestic savings fall short of the zero carbon targets set out in London Plan Policy 5.2 and draft London Plan Policy S12.

63 The applicant should therefore consider the scope for further savings before making an appropriate contribution to the borough’s carbon offset fund through the section 106 agreement. Other further information is required in relation phasing and de-commissioning of
the Phase 1 plant room and net efficiencies for the CHP, as detailed in a separate note that has been provided directly to the applicant and the Council.

Climate change adaptation

64 London Plan Policy 5.10 and Policy G5 of the draft London Plan seek the incorporation of new green infrastructure as part of development proposals, and London Plan policies 5.12 and 5.13 and policies SI12 and SI13 of the draft London Plan seek to reduce flood risk and secure sustainable urban drainage systems to reduce surface water runoff.

65 The applicant has prepared a Flood Risk Assessment and notes that the site is susceptible to groundwater and surface water flooding. A sustainable drainage strategy is proposed to attenuate surface water across the site, including swales/ponds, green/brown roofs, podium deck spaces and permeable block paving. The scheme proposes to reduce run-off by at least 50% from the current discharge, which is welcomed. Given the outline nature of the application and that details of the drainage strategy are at a reasonably high level, a specific condition will be necessary to secure a more detailed drainage strategy prior to commencement to ensure implementation of the specific measures to address localised flooding and storm events in particular.

Transport

Site access and highway impact

66 There will be no direct access from the TLRN but improvements are proposed to the High Path / Morden Road (SRN) signalised junction in order to facilitate access for service vehicles in the western part of the estate. Further work is required before TfL can agree the principle of the changes proposed including updated modelling and a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. Notwithstanding this, the proposed development will result in a net reduction in two-way vehicle trips during all periods and will therefore have a negligible impact on the operation of the strategic highway network.

Car parking

67 The application proposes approximately 0.17 parking spaces per unit, resulting in an overall provision of 269 spaces for a total of 1,570 units. No standard car parking spaces are proposed for the non-residential land uses within the estate including office, retail, leisure and community uses, which is acceptable. This represents a reduction in the existing on-site spaces (422 excluding private driveways and garages), which is welcomed. The level is also consistent with the draft London Plan maximum car parking standards (up to 0.5 spaces per unit). A car parking management plan should be secured by planning condition, together with provision of electric vehicle charging points to accord with draft London Plan standards.

68 TfL would recommend that all new residents are offered a minimum of 2 years car club membership through the s106 agreement.

Cycle parking and cycle infrastructure

69 Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with draft London Plan standards. The actual cycle parking provision, including minimum provision to accord with the parameter plans, should be quantified by the applicant prior to Stage 2 and secured by condition.
For the flexible retail uses, in order to conform with draft London Plan standards, the highest applicable cycle parking standard should be applied as opposed to assuming 50% A1 food retail and 50% A3 cafe/restaurant standards. Visitor and short stay parking provision should be secured by condition.

The applicant should also confirm what improvements are proposed to encourage cycling other than cycle parking, how the development will contribute positively to an integrated cycling network and how it will provide links to existing cycle routes.

**Trip generation, modal split**

Whilst the proposed trip generation methodology and selected TRICS sites is considered to be acceptable in principle, there are some errors in the net trip generation calculation tables. These need to be corrected before TfL can assess the impacts on the public transport network.

**Buses and trams**

The applicant has indicated that they have aspirations to relocate two bus stops in the vicinity of the estate, and further discussion is required in relation to the details of the new locations, with plans provided and secured in agreement with TfL. The applicant is also encouraged to investigate potential bus stop locations on the A24 Merantun Way for route 470 which would assist with enhancing accessibility to the south of the estate. Once the trip generation assessment is updated, TfL will be able to confirm the bus contribution required.

As detailed in the original TfL pre-application response, the potential tram extension from South Wimbledon to Sutton would operate along Morden Road. TfL has previously requested that an area of land fronting Morden Road is safeguarded for the potential South Wimbledon Tram stop. TfL would welcome more detailed discussions with the applicant prior to the reserved matters application in relation to the height and width requirements of the safeguarding area.

**Local planning authority’s position**

Merton Council planning officers are generally supportive of the application, but are currently viewing technical aspects including heritage impacts. It is understood that this application, together with the applications for Ravensbury and Eastfields Estate will be reported to Planning Committee in February 2018.

**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 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

There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

London Plan and draft London Plan policies on estate regeneration, urban design, climate change and transport are relevant to this application. The principle of the comprehensive estate renewal, which increases overall housing delivery is supported; however, the application does not fully comply with the London Plan and draft London Plan. The scheme could become compliant if the following matters are resolved:

- **Estate regeneration**: The estate regeneration scheme would result in no net loss of affordable housing with replacement homes being provided on an equivalent basis. The applicant’s viability assessment will be robustly interrogated to ensure the maximum amount of additional affordable housing is provided. Review mechanisms in accordance with the draft London Plan and Affordable Housing and Viability SPG will be secured.

- **Commercial and community uses**: The provision of flexible retail and commercial uses, including incubator and SME workspace is supported. The re-provided community facility must be secured in accordance with Policy S1 of the draft London Plan.

- **Urban design**: The overall design strategy is supported and the plans and design code demonstrate that a suitably high residential quality, amenity provision and public realm would be achieved, which would contribute towards an overall enhancement of the estate. The scheme would preserve existing heritage assets. Robust conditions are required to secure the design commitments made by the applicant.

- **Climate change**: Further information is required, including scope for further carbon savings, before an appropriate contribution to the Council’s carbon offset fund is secured. Details of the drainage strategy also need to be secured by condition.

- **Transport**: Further information is required in relation to junction improvement works, trip generation assessment and cycling infrastructure improvements. A number of mitigation measures, conditions and obligations are also required.

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