

Former Harold Wood Hospital

in the London Borough of Havering

planning application no. P0720.08

Strategic planning application stage 1 update report (GLA powers)

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Act 1999; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2000.

The proposal

The application comprises two elements:

- An outline application for the redevelopment of the site to provide 810 dwellings; and
- Submission of full details, and an application for listed building consent, in relation to the retention, with alterations, of 'The Grange' grade-II listed building within the site to provide 11 flats and for a two storey building adjacent to The Grange to provide 4 flats.

The applicant

The applicant is **Countryside Properties**, and the architect is **Scott Brownrigg**.

Strategic issues

The proposal will utilise a disused hospital site and the principle of residential development at an acceptable **density** is supported. However there are concerns regarding the proposed level of **affordable housing**. The **design** is appropriate, although the level of detail is limited as this is an outline application. The exception is the redevelopment of a **listed building**. Further information is required regarding **parking levels**, the provision of **living roofs**, and **active cooling**.

Recommendation

That Havering Council be advised that while the application is generally acceptable in strategic planning terms the application does not comply with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 86 of this report; but that the possible remedies set out in paragraph 88 of this report could address these deficiencies.

Context

1 On 28 April 2008 the Mayor of London first received documents from Havering Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. The application was initially considered by the Mayor at his planning meeting of 11 June 2008 (report PDU/0152b/01). On 8 July 2010, the Mayor of London received revised

proposals in response to comments offered previously. This report sets out information for the Mayor's use in deciding what decision to make on the revised proposal.

2 The application is referable under Category 1A of the Schedule to the Order 2008: *"Development which comprises or includes the provision of more than 500 houses, flats, or houses and flats."*

3 Once Havering 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, or allow the Council to determine it itself.

4 The environmental information for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 has been taken into account in the consideration of this case.

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

Site description

6 The site is located within Harold Wood, which is less than three miles north east of Romford. It is sited to the east of the Gallows Corner junction which links the A12, Colchester Road with the A127, Southend Arterial Road, both of which form part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). Harold Wood train station, which offers services to Essex and Central London, is located within an acceptable walking distance of the site as are three different bus routes. As such it has been calculated that the majority of the site demonstrates a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 3, on a scale of 1-6 where 6 is classed as excellent.

7 The site has an area of 12.69 hectares and is bounded to the south by the Shenfield to London Liverpool Street railway line; to the north and west, running along the boundary of the site is residential development, with a number of terraced houses on The Drive and Whitmore Avenue, with recent development on former hospital land. Access is via Gubbins Lane, which forms the eastern boundary.

8 The local area of the site is suburban in nature and as well as the residential development, there is a high provision of public open space. The centre of the site is a ten-minute walk to Harold Wood station, the local amenities, a supermarket and various industrial areas for employment. Within the wider area there are a number of primary and secondary schools.

9 The site contains a Grade-II listed building known as 'The Grange'. In 1883, The Grange was built on the site of Great Gubbins by John Compton.

Details of the proposal

10 This case is an outline planning application seeking consent for residential development and public open space on land formerly known as Harold Wood Hospital, Harold Wood. The proposals include 810 dwellings arranged in blocks of two to four storeys, although a five-storey building is proposed adjacent to Harold Wood railway station, as part of the final development phase. The nine-storey building proposed as part of the original application has not been included within the current layout, with the 'Central Square' focal point of the previous scheme now marked with a four-storey building intended to provide significant massing as an appropriate response.

11 The site layout includes a total of 2.1ha of public open space, which would include a minimum of 1.27ha of public space, representing 10% of the total site area. This will be

strategically located to form a network of green spaces and links through the site. An east-west bus only route through the development will connect Lister Lane with Gubbins Lane.

12 As part of the redevelopment, it is proposed that The Grange will be converted to eleven residential units, providing a mixture of one- and two-bedroom apartments. Existing extensions will be demolished and a new two-storey extension is proposed to the rear of the building, to provide four new build apartments and internal amenity space.

13 The outline component of the proposal seeks to retain layout, scale, appearance and landscaping as reserved matters.

Case history

14 In 2001, Havering Council referred an application (reference P0704.01) for a residential scheme of approximately 10ha of the former hospital site, proposing a density of 37 dwellings per hectare and incorporating 10% open space. This was a departure from the Council's development plan and the Mayor considered this application on 27 September 2001. Although indicating broad support for the scheme, he highlighted concerns regarding the level of development proposed (he considered that more residential development could be sustained), the level of affordable housing, the location of open space, and accessibility. Havering Council resolved to grant permission, subject to satisfactory completion of the Section 106 agreement. This, however, was never completed and the application was not approved.

15 Another application was submitted to the Council in 2006, to redevelop 8.56 hectares of the site with 480 dwellings (reference P0141.06), but the application did not require referral to the Mayor. This application was refused on the grounds of over development and lack of traffic generation information. In response, the applicant submitted a revised application for the same site area (reference P1232.06) to provide 423 dwellings, 35% on site affordable housing, 10% open space, 10% on site renewable energy and a bus link through the site. The application was granted approval.

16 The original iteration of this current application was referred to the Mayor in 2008, with 874 dwellings proposed in a similar layout to what is being proposed in the current layout. However, this proposal included an eleven-storey building. In considering the application at his planning meeting of 11 June 2008, he accepted the principle of residential development and the proposed density, but stated that further information was required with regard to the proposed level of affordable housing, climate change mitigation and adaptation, flood risk, access, noise and transport. The application was then deferred by Havering councillors, to enable the applicant to address the Council's concerns.

17 The current proposal would reduce the proposed number of dwellings to 810, with a corresponding decrease in the residential density and the level of affordable housing provision. These changes are explained in detail within this report.

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

18 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Housing *London Plan; PPS3; Housing SPG; Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation SPG, Housing Strategy; revised interim Housing SPG*
- Affordable housing *London Plan; PPS3; Housing SPG, Housing Strategy; revised interim Housing SPG*

- Density *London Plan; PPS3; Housing SPG; revised interim Housing SPG*
- Urban design *London Plan; PPS1*
- Access *London Plan; PPS1; Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG; Planning and Access for Disabled People: a good practice guide (ODPM)*
- Transport *London Plan; the Mayor's Transport Strategy; PPG13*
- Parking *London Plan; the Mayor's Transport Strategy; PPG13*
- Sustainable development *London Plan; PPS1, PPS1 supplement; PPS3; PPG13; PPS22; draft PPS Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate; the Mayor's Energy Strategy; Mayor's draft Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies; Mayor's draft Water Strategy; Sustainable Design and Construction SPG*
- Biodiversity *London Plan; the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy; PPS9; draft PPS Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment*
- Noise *London Plan; the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy; PPG24*
- Flood risk *London Plan; Mayor's draft Water Strategy; PPS25, RPG3B*

19 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 2008 Havering Council Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, the Havering Council Site Specific Allocations document and the London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2004).

20 The draft replacement London Plan, published in October 2009 for consultation, is also a relevant material consideration.

Housing

21 The mix of the proposed 810 dwellings is shown in the table below

	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms	5 bedrooms	Total
Houses		22	208	44	8	282 (35%)
Flats	185	315	28			528 (65%)
Total	185 (23%)	337 (42%)	236 (29%)	44 (5%)	8 (1%)	810

22 Family accommodation represents 35.5% of the total accommodation, with the majority as houses. There is a greater proportion of houses than the previous version of the application, which proposed 29% of dwellings as houses. Houses take 47.3% of the site area, with 26.8% occupied by flatted buildings. This is an appropriate split, given that the predominant surrounding character is family homes, and smaller homes can be located close to the railway station and other facilities where demand for such homes is higher.

Children's play space

23 Policy 3D .13 of the London Plan sets out that "the Mayor will and the boroughs should ensure developments that include housing make provision for play and informal recreation, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs." Using the methodology within the Mayor's supplementary planning guidance 'Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation' it is anticipated that there will be

approximately 346 children within the development. The guidance sets a benchmark of 10 sq.m. of useable child playspace to be provided per child, with under-5 child playspace provided on-site. As such the development should make provision for 3,462 sq.m. of playspace.

24 The applicant has set out a play space strategy within the design and access statement that indicates that three proposed local areas of play (LAPs) will be situated in communal areas providing play opportunities for toddlers and young children within a supervised area. In addition, it proposes:

- 10,200 square metres of ‘passive recreation’ area throughout the development.
- One local equipped area of play (LEAP) of 800 square metres for formal play.
- Three LEAPs (to be agreed) for informal play.

25 The scheme proposes a centrally located area of open space referred to as the ‘Central Square’, extending to approximately 0.6 hectares. This space will provide informal and formal recreation space while retaining important trees and will incorporate paved surfaces and play equipment. Pocket parks and communal areas will also be situated throughout the development, including several green spaces, which provide children’s play areas (LAPs), as well as hard standing and shrub planting.

26 The provision of this space should take account for the varying play needs of children of different ages that will live in this development. It is accepted that the scheme provides a good proportion of recreational land and is likely to deliver sufficient play space.

Affordable housing

27 London Plan Policy 3A.10 requires borough councils to seek the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing when negotiating on individual private residential and mix-use schemes. In doing so, each council should have regard to its own overall target for the amount of affordable housing provision. Policy 3A.9 states that such targets should be based on an assessment of regional and local housing need and a realistic assessment of supply, and should take account of the London Plan strategic target that 35% of housing should be social and 15% intermediate provision, and of the promotion of mixed and balanced communities. In addition, Policy 3A.10 encourages councils to have regard to the need to encourage rather than restrain residential development, and to the individual circumstances of the site. Targets should be applied flexibly, taking account of individual site costs, the availability of public subsidy and other scheme requirements. Havering Council has an adopted policy with a borough-wide target of 50%.

28 Policy 3A.10 is supported by paragraph 3.52, which urges borough councils to take account of economic viability when estimating the appropriate amount of affordable provision. The ‘Three Dragons’ development control toolkit is recommended for this purpose. The results of a toolkit appraisal might need to be independently verified.

29 The provision of affordable housing is shown within the following schedule.

Tenure	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms	5 bedrooms	Total
Private flat	159	267	28			454 (56%)
Private house		22	177	36		235 (29%)
Aff. flat	26	48				74 (9%)

Aff. house			31	8	8	47 (6%)
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30 The overall level of affordable housing provision is 15% of the total housing provision. This is substantially lower than the Havering Council target of 50%, and the previous scheme, for which a viability assessment suggested that 31% could be a realistic level of provision. The Council has worked closely with the applicant to reach agreement over the 15% level of provision.

31 The applicant has submitted a viability assessment that utilises the “Three Dragons” toolkit model, which demonstrates that there are no unreasonable costs in the assessment. The assessment also notes that the development is unviable even at 15% affordable housing provision, but that increasing property values during the build stages will make up the difference. An opportunity for a review in the level of affordable housing between phases of development has been built into the viability study. Nonetheless, this is a significant variation within the Council and GLA’s targets. An independent review of the viability assessment should be undertaken, and any findings should be reported to the Mayor when the application is referred back to him.

32 The mix of social rented to intermediate housing is likely to be 70:30, which is in line with London Plan and Havering Council policy. The level of affordable family housing will be 38%, which is acceptable. Affordable housing locations within the site have not been finalised, but it is the applicant’s intention to distribute tenures throughout the site. In the interests of creating a balanced community, this is strongly encouraged.

Density

33 London Plan policy 3A.3 aims to “ensure that development proposals achieve the maximum intensity of use compatible with local context...and with local transport capacity”. Planning applications should reflect the density matrix set out in Table 3A.2 of the London Plan. The following table shows how the proposals compare to the values in table 3.A2 (the density matrix).

34 The majority of the site has been assessed to have a PTAL of 3, therefore the density matrix suggests that the development should aiming for a density of between 40-80 units per hectare. The previous site proposed a gross density proposed 68 units per hectare. The current proposal proposes a density of 64 units per hectare, but would vary within phases between 33 and 97 units per hectare. Considering that some of the site is assessed as having a PTAL of 1, this is an appropriate density, which maximises the site’s potential for residential development whilst not representing over-development. The density parameter plan indicates that areas with the greatest accessibility will have the highest density. The density is therefore appropriate to the local context.

Urban design

35 Good design is central to all objectives of the London Plan and is specifically promoted by the policies contained within Chapter 4B which address both general design principles and specific design issues. Policy 4B.1 sets out overarching design principles for London and states that the Mayor will seek to ensure that new developments maximise site potential, enhance the public realm, provide a mix of uses, are accessible, inclusive, legible, sustainable, safe, inspiring, exciting and respect London’s natural and built heritage. Policy 4B.1 also notes that development should contribute to adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of climate change, promote a sustainable, durable and adaptable approach in terms of design, construction and use as well as enhancing green networks and the blue ribbon network. Other policies include general design principles relating to the promotion of world-class design, maximising the potential of sites, ensuring

appropriate development densities, improving the public realm and creating accessible environments.

36 This is an outline application, and all design matters (other than access) are reserved. However a series of parameter plans have been submitted that would be adopted as part of any outline permission, and would bind the developer at reserved matters stage. These plans proscribe parameters for land use (including areas of landscape), density, building heights and development patterns. Indicative designs are also included within the design and access statement.

37 The scheme is well considered with a mixture of flatted accommodation and townhouses arranged around private garden spaces and generous public spaces. The proposed number of houses has increased following the revision of the application, and all have back gardens, with flatted blocks facing open spaces, including some raised podium decks. These spaces would successfully integrate well with the areas network of streets and existing open spaces. The main entrance to the site is opposite Harold Wood Station and a local shopping parade, and the blocks of flats are set back from the road to provide a direct route from the station and the shopping parade into the development. The entrance setting will also be attractive and welcoming, with a balancing pond water feature proposed within the landscaping. This avoids the development becoming too inward looking and helps integrate it with the surrounding community and with public transport services, as well as providing overlooking and a greater sense of security to the users of the space. The balancing pond would be part of the sustainable urban drainage system and is a good example of the thoughtful integration of design and sustainability aspirations.

38 The building heights across the site are relatively modest and are predominantly between two and four storeys, reflecting the suburban context, with a five-storey block located opposite the station, marking the entrance to the development. There is an existing ten-storey hospital building on the site, and the height, mass and bulk of the scheme is well considered and sensitive to its context. The layout of the proposed dwellings has echoes of suburban layouts within the area, and the scale of dwellings is suitable to ensure that optimal use is made of the land. The main square is clearly the centre of the scheme, and while it is no longer marked by the nine-storey building of the previous version of the scheme, the enclosure of the space would be enabled at a suitable scale to add to the overall visual interest and character of the development.

39 Although there is presently only minimal information relating to the internal design of buildings, the applicant is urged to ensure that the development is finished to a suitable high standard, to ensure that the living conditions of future residents is optimal. The Mayor's draft *London Housing Design Guide* is a useful guide to the benchmarks that he expects development in London to achieve. The applicant should provide indicative housing layouts to establish suitable benchmarks within the outline consent.

40 The existing listed building on the site would be retained and refurbished, and its setting would be much improved by the careful placement of residential blocks in order to form a suitable setting for the building from the front aspect at the east. There are also a number of protected mature trees on the site and these have been taken into account in planning the site, in order to retain as many as possible. Removal of certain trees will only be undertaken with the agreement of the Council. The railway line to the south of the site is in a deep cutting and is heavily wooded, making a significant contribution to biodiversity and the landscape setting of the site. The main open spaces on the site are contiguous with this space, and this will positively contribute towards the visual amenity and biodiversity of the scheme.

41 Car parking on the site is provided in a mix of on street, off street court and off street ground level under-deck spaces. The development would not be being dominated by surface car parks and the mix of on and off street parking proposed is welcomed.

42 A contemporary approach is proposed to the design of the housing and flats. The design and access statement indicates that the proposed form of dwellings would incorporate a mix of flat and pitched roofs, with the terraced housing proposing a form of butterfly roof similar to that found traditionally in other parts of London. The reinterpretation of historic terraced housing forms is welcomed and avoids pastiche, whilst enabling the maximisation of the sites development potential. The suggested palette of materials comprising brick and render and stone/timber panelling is relatively restrained and should provide an overall coherence to the development whilst avoiding monotony. The Council is urged to ensure that the quality of the design is maintained through the reserved matters stage, to implementation.

43 Overall this is a well considered masterplan, that provides a good balance of public and private open space and of dwelling types, has carefully considered its context and would be well integrated with its surroundings.

Access

44 London Plan policy 3A.5 aims to ensure that all new housing is build to 'Lifetime homes' standards and ten percent of all new housing is designed to be wheelchair accessible, or easily adaptable to be wheelchair accessible.

45 The applicant has set out a commitment to provide 100% of units to meet 'Lifetime Homes' standards and also to ensure that all residential units are wheelchair accessible internally. As this is an outline scheme, full compliance with London Plan policy cannot be determined, and as such the applicant is strongly encouraged to ensure that there is a satisfactory mix of wheelchair adapted or adaptable dwellings across all tenures and dwelling sizes.

Transport and parking

Comments from Transport for London

Traffic impact

46 Through previous discussions between the applicant, the Council and Transport for London (TfL) on the initial proposals, it has been established that the relative impact of the development on the A12 does require mitigation, and as such, a capped contribution has been agreed for the necessary works. Given the nature of the amendments proposed as part of this revised application, TfL's previous position remains valid. TfL therefore welcomes the proposed contribution of £283,500 towards highway improvements, to be secured through the s106 agreement. TfL requests to be party to the agreement, in order to ensure that the necessary traffic management measures can be adequately coordinated with any wider works undertaken by TfL on the A12. This would ensure compliance with London Plan policy 3C.17, '*Tackling Congestion and reducing traffic*' and draft London Plan policy 6.11, '*Smoothing Traffic flow and tackling congestion*'. TfL would therefore welcome further discussions on this matter with the applicant and the Council.

47 In accordance with the London Plan policy 3C.25 '*Freight strategy*', and draft replacement London Plan policy 6.14 '*Freight*', TfL would recommend that a construction and logistics plan (CLP), and a delivery and servicing plan (DSP) should both be secured for the site by condition, to minimise the impact of service, construction and refuse vehicles on the road network.

Parking

48 To reflect the size of the residential units, 1,215 car parking spaces are now proposed for the site, which are at the maximum range allowed by London Plan standards. However, as

previously stated, given the relatively good access to public transport from the site, and the significant existing and predicted future level of congestion on the A12 and the A127, TfL requests that this proposed level be reduced. It should also be noted that since the application was originally submitted, there is now a requirement for all new developments to provide electric vehicle charging points. To comply with policy 6.13 of the draft revised London Plan, 20% of all residential parking spaces will need to provide electric vehicle charging points, with a further 20% having passive provision. Additionally, TfL welcomes the contribution of £15,000 being agreed by the applicant to fund a review of the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), around Harold Wood station.

49 The proposed level of cycle parking is understood to be proposed in line with TfL's cycle parking guidance; however the exact number of spaces to be provided is not mentioned and therefore needs to be confirmed for TfL to confirm its acceptability. Alongside this, it should also be noted that all cycle parking must be secure and easily accessible. Cycle routes should be signed and promoted both for the benefit of new residents and those passing through the site.

Buses

50 TfL previously clarified that Lister Avenue is not currently served by any bus route and has not been tested for bus operations. It is understood however that this route is now in the process of being adopted by the Council, which is welcomed. As previously discussed and given the nature of the revised proposals, a contribution of £513,873 towards the cost of operating a new bus service through the site as a result of the development impact and to be secured through the s106 agreement, is welcomed. This is in line with London Plan policy 3C.20, '*Improving conditions for buses*' and draft replacement London Plan policy 6.7, '*Buses, bus transit and trams*'. TfL would however welcome further discussions with the applicant over the final triggers to be agreed for the payments.

51 TfL welcomes the commitment of the developer to provide four new bus stops within the development site. These should be fully accessible and compliant with TfL standards. Their full cost should be covered by the developer through the s106.

Other matters

52 The maximum payment of £85,000 towards the enforcement of a bus only link through the site is sufficient. However, as previously stated, TfL would oppose active physical enforcement measures, such as rising bollards, as they do not comply with TfL guidance on traffic calming measures for bus routes and would rather encourage soft measures to be introduced, such as CCTV and signage strategy. Despite this, TfL is confident that a suitable enforcement solution can be found in liaison with Havering Council, in line with London Plan policy 3C.14, '*Enhanced bus priority, tram and busway transit schemes*'.

53 TfL previously advised the applicant that the submitted residential travel plan was not acceptable in its current form, as the indicative target identified was very limited, and it was also unclear how the travel plan would be implemented and who would be responsible for each action. Very amendments appear to have been implemented since the application was originally submitted, and the plan must therefore be revised, and agreed by TfL and the local planning authority prior to implementation and first occupation on site, and must be secured via the s106 agreement.

54 Subject to the above matters being addressed through further discussions on bus contributions, the impact on the highway, formation of a travel plan alongside securing a delivery and servicing and construction logistics plans TfL considers the development would accord with the transportation policies of the London Plan as detailed above.

Sustainable development

55 As part of the outline application, the applicant has proposed a 'positive' drainage system that is drained into water storage tanks and a balancing pond, located at the front of the site. The design statement states that the creation of additional areas for drainage will provide opportunity for biodiversity and will require specialised design and management.

56 The GLA will strongly support the incorporation of sustainable features within the scheme, such as sustainable urban drainage and rainwater collection, grey water recycling and water and energy saving devices. The provision of rainwater butts at houses is welcomed. The GLA supports the proposed level 4 rating within the Code for Sustainable Homes. The proposed level of green and brown roof provision has not been demonstrated, and as part of the Mayor's proposals for biodiversity, sustainability and urban greening, a statement on their provision should be submitted by the applicant.

Energy

57 The applicant has broadly followed the energy hierarchy in Policy 4A.1. Sufficient information has been provided to understand the proposals as a whole. However, further information is required before the carbon savings can be verified.

58 Combined regulated and unregulated carbon dioxide emissions based on a 2006 Building Regulations compliant development, have been estimated to be 2,541 Tonnes of CO₂ per annum.

Be lean

59 A range of passive design features and demand reduction measures are proposed to reduce the carbon emissions of the proposed development. Both air permeability and heat loss parameters will be improved beyond the minimum requirements set by building regulations. Other features include mechanical ventilation with heat recovery and high efficiency condensing boilers.

60 On a whole energy basis, i.e. including regulated and unregulated elements, the development is estimated to emit 2,078 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per annum after the application of passive design and energy efficiency measures. A reduction in CO₂ emissions of [18]% compared to the baseline will be achieved through this first element of the energy hierarchy.

61 Where possible, the applicant should also relate the development to 2010 building regulations by providing an indication of the savings over a 2010 Part L compliant building at each stage of the energy hierarchy.

Be clean

62 Within the amended energy proposals, the heating and hot water requirements will no longer be delivered via a site wide heat network, but via a series of gas fired boilers within block boiler rooms and within individual houses across the proposed development. Where blocks would be grouped together, a 'master' boiler room would be employed in one of the blocks, feeding all adjacent blocks.

63 It is accepted that individual houses would not have to be connected to the communal heat network. Given the particular characteristics of this development – blocks of flats interspersed amongst houses – it is accepted that it would not be practical to connect all the individual blocks of flats within this development with a single heat network.

64 The applicant has proposed to cluster some blocks of flats together (e.g. blocks G, H and P), and the potential for taking this approach further should be investigated. For example, the potential for connecting the two clusters on the eastern side of the development should be considered, along with those in the south-western corner. The applicant should investigate the potential to minimise the number of energy centres.

65 A 250kWe combined heat and power (CHP) unit was proposed to supply a site wide heat network in the original strategy. The applicant has since discounted this. It is accepted, given the size of the communal heating clusters likely to emerge, that CHP would not be applicable in this case.

66 The applicant should provide a robust cooling strategy, which addresses the risk of overheating. The applicant should clarify whether the scheme would require active cooling, and how this would be provided.

Be green

67 In the original strategy, the use of photovoltaic (PV) panels was discounted in favour of biomass boilers. In the revised strategy, the use of PV and solar thermal is proposed instead of biomass boilers, to meet the renewable energy requirements.

68 The applicant should provide roof drawings showing the amount of roof that is available within the development and that could be used to install photovoltaic modules with suitable orientation and free of shading. An estimate of the electricity savings from PV should be provided.

69 On a whole energy basis, the development is estimated to emit 1,948 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per annum after the application of renewable energy. A reduction in CO₂ emissions of 4.3% will be achieved through this third element of the energy hierarchy.

Overall acceptability

70 The estimated carbon emissions savings are 592 tonnes of CO₂ per year after the cumulative effect of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy has been taken into account. This equates to a reduction of 23.3% compared to a 2006 Building Regulations compliant building.

Biodiversity

71 The development site is adjacent to a site of nature conservation importance, as identified on Havering Council's proposals map. Railway corridors are recognised as important corridors for movement and/or habitat of species. The Environmental Statement indicates that biodiversity impacts within the development site will be negligible, provided the recommendations for their mitigation and the routine safeguard of sensitive features are implemented.

72 The applicant has submitted information regarding ecology as part of its Environmental Statement in support of the application. This is an adequate appraisal of the impacts of the proposal on biodiversity. Biodiversity impacts within the development site will be negligible provided the recommendations for their mitigation and the routine safeguard of sensitive features are implemented. These include the retention of trees (including an identified bat roost) and the addition of new native species within the site's green spaces, creation of habitat for water birds, and the creation of a buffer along the southern boundary of the development, between the site of nature conservation and the development, incorporating habitat enhancements and creation. Although there will be a loss of semi-natural habitat during the construction phase, the effects are considered reversible as a result of the proposed habitat creation within the scheme.

73 In summary the Ecology chapter presents a series of feasible measures that would successfully mitigate for the biodiversity impacts as identified. All proposed mitigation measures must be secured by planning condition.

Noise

74 The noise and vibration information within the Environmental Statement (ES) states that there are several significant noise sources that will impact parts of this development. These include road traffic noise from Gubbins Lane (eastern boundary), railway noise (south-eastern boundary) and noise from extractor fans within nearby buildings. Noise increases at existing dwellings as a result of new traffic generated by the development, is not expected to be significant – the largest increase would be rated as ‘minor’ and is predicted to occur at a location where absolute noise levels are low. Significant road traffic generated increases in vibration at existing dwellings are not expected. Limits on noise and vibration and hours of work during the demolition and construction phase can be set by Havering so as to minimise any disturbance to existing residents.

75 Road traffic noise affecting the easternmost block, and railway noise affecting this and other blocks along the southeastern boundary, will fall into Noise Exposure Category (NEC) C of PPG 24 where the advice is "*Planning permission should not normally be granted. Where it is considered that permission should be given, for example because there are no alternative quieter sites available, conditions should be imposed to ensure a commensurate level of protection against noise.*" It is not unusual to grant permission, with suitable conditions, in such cases in London, due to the lack of alternative, quieter sites. However, where noise sensitive development is exposed to a major source of noise (as indicated in this case by NEC C) then, in line with London Plan policy 4A.20, consideration should be given to separating the residential elements from the traffic noise, for example by locating the habitable rooms on quieter facades.

76 This possibility was not considered within the initial proposal. In response to the Mayor's comments in 2008, the updated Environmental Statement notes that, " if the Local Planning Authority (LPA) wishes to achieve the 'good' standards then this could be imposed by means of a suitable planning condition that requires a scheme of noise mitigation to be submitted to the LPA for their approval, which would be met by improving the specification of windows of affected dwellings." However the applicant argues in its submission that the standard double-glazed windows would achieve the levels required for satisfactory habitation of dwellings. This needs to be considered in conjunction with the cooling strategy, for which additional details are being sought (refer to the comments within the previous section).

77 Another concern is the suggestion (for both road and railway noise) to couple the acoustic glazing with simple passive ventilators. Since windows will need to be kept closed at all times to achieve the suggested internal noise levels, a better standard of ventilation should be provided. This could be via mechanical ventilation or air conditioning, but preferably should utilise systems that give a good airflow without incurring extra energy usage, such as a passive stack system.

78 In respect of addressing road and railway noise, therefore, the proposals do not represent the highest quality of acoustic design.

79 The extractor systems on the McKesson and University buildings, on the western boundary of the site, have the potential to create serious noise impacts at nearby new dwellings. In terms of absolute levels of noise inside the dwellings, these impacts could, in principle, be addressed by suitable acoustic glazing. However, this type of noise is most commonly assessed using BS4142, which compares the emitted noise levels (penalised for any tonal or impulsive qualities) with the prevailing background noise levels to determine the likelihood of complaints from affected residents.

80 The ES provides such a BS4142 assessment, which indicates that without further measures complaints are likely from the residents. The ES lists the potential further measures as: work to reduce the noise at source, using intervening buildings to screen gardens, placing habitable rooms facing away from the noise sources, or the use of sealed windows where habitable rooms face the sources. Screening gardens is strongly supported. For the dwellings themselves, in line with London Plan policy 4A.20 on noise, reduction at source (which would be the best solution, if sufficient reductions could be achieved, and would also benefit gardens) and/or locating habitable rooms on quieter facades are strongly preferable to sealed glazing. The applicant has undertaken to introduce noise screening where properties would be most affected by railway noise.

81 The preferred solutions should be able to prevent complaints from residents. The use of sealed glazing is likely to be far less acceptable to residents and might not prevent complaints. Unlike the position for road and railway noise, it is possible for residents to seek legal action against this type of noise. Havering Environmental Health Officers would be obliged to investigate any complaints and to serve notice on those responsible, if they considered the noise was a statutory nuisance. Alternatively, it is open to residents to directly take their own legal action. The applicant is therefore strongly encouraged to consider the position of habitable rooms within the detailed scheme design.

Flood risk

82 The site is within a low risk flood area. Following the Mayor's comments regarding the methodology used within the flood risk assessment within the original application, the strategy has been updated and is now appropriate. Measures to be incorporated within the scheme to mitigate its impact, such as sustainable urban drainage and dwelling rainwater collection, are supported.

Local planning authority's position

83 The application is likely to be recommended for approval by Council officers; the application having been amended to address concerns raised by Councillors, resulting in the application's original deferment in 2008.

Legal considerations

84 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

85 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

86 London Plan policies on housing, affordable housing, density, urban design, access, transport and parking, sustainable development, biodiversity, noise and flood risk are relevant to this application. The application complies with some of these policies but not with others, for the following reasons:

- **Housing:** The level of housing provision and play space, including family homes, is supported and the proposal complies with the London Plan.
- **Affordable housing:** The proposed level of 15% is well below the London Plan guide level of 50%. The tenure mix is compliant with the London Plan.
- **Density:** Provides a level appropriate to the suburban setting.
- **Urban design:** A good standard of design that complies with the London Plan, although the Council is urged to ensure that a high standard of design quality is carried through to the reserved matters stage and implementation. The treatment of the Grade-II listed building is appropriate.
- **Access:** Complies with the London Plan in terms of Lifetime Homes achievement, although the detailed design should include a mix of wheelchair adaptable/adapted dwelling types and sizes.
- **Transport and parking:** Currently not compliant with the London Plan, although it could be, subject to agreement on car and cycle parking levels and provision of other information. Traffic impact is acceptable, although the Travel Plan will need to be agreed with TfL prior to implementation.
- **Sustainable development:** Generally compliant, although some concern remains regarding the provision of living roofs, and additional information required within the energy strategy.
- **Biodiversity:** Provides a range of mitigation measures, and compliant with the London Plan.
- **Noise:** Generally compliant, but there are some issues with road and railway noise that require further investigation. The detailed design should seek to orientate habitable rooms away from noise sources.
- **Flood risk:** This is a low risk area and the flood risk assessment is compliant with the London Plan.

87 Whilst the application is broadly acceptable in strategic planning terms, on balance, the application does not comply with the London Plan.

88 The following changes might, however, remedy the above-mentioned deficiencies, and could possibly lead to the application becoming compliant with the London Plan:

- **Affordable housing:** The proposed level of 15% is low, and although a viability assessment supports this level, third-party assessment findings are requested.

- **Urban design:** The applicant should provide indicative text and housing layouts to establish suitable benchmarks for housing standards, within the outline consent.
- **Transport and parking:** The proposed levels of car and cycle parking should be revised to achieve compliance with London Plan levels. Electric parking provision and bus access through the restricted point should be clarified.
- **Sustainable development:** The proposal should incorporate green and brown roofs where possible. The energy strategy should provide an indication of the savings over a 2010 Part L compliant building at each stage of the energy hierarchy. The potential to minimise the number of energy centres should be investigated, and an active cooling strategy should be provided. More information is required regarding the location and savings generated from photovoltaic panels.
- **Noise:** An active cooling strategy should be submitted, relevant to dwellings close to noise sources.

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