

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.42 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present:

Councillor Amin Rahman (Chair)

Councillor Iqbal Hossain (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Saied Ahmed

Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury

Councillor Kamrul Hussain

Councillor Asma Begum

Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain

Councillor Sabina Khan

Councillor Kabir Hussain

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin

Councillor Suluk Ahmed

Councillor Ahmodur Khan

Officers Present:

Paul Buckenham – (Head of Development Management, Planning and Building Control)

Dr Somen Banerjee – (Director of Public Health)

Diane Phillips – (Lawyer, Legal Services)

Emily Humphreys – Consultant In Public Health

Shahi Mofozil – (Access to Employment (Skillsmatch), Economic Development,)

Aelswith Frayne	– (Head of Employment and Skills)
Gareth Gwynne	– (Area Planning Manager (West), Planning and Building Control)
Jane Jin	– (Team Leader, Planning and Building Control)
Aleksandra Milentijevic	– (Principal Planning Officer, Planning Services)
Justina Bridgeman	– Democratic Services Officer (Committee)

Invited Guests:

Alex Portlock	- (Senior Development Manager, Hadley Blackwall Yard Properties)
Jeff Simons	- (Chief Operating Officer, Uber Boats, Thames Clippers)
Danny Fiumicelli	- (Specialist Acoustic Consultant, Buro Happold)
Jonathan Roynon	-(Specialist Acoustic Consultant, Buro Happold)

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests, however all Members were contacted by residents via emails all calls in regards to all applications.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The Committee **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 28 August 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROCEDURE FOR HEARING OBJECTIONS AND MEETING GUIDANCE

The Committee **RESOLVED** that:

1. In the event of changes being made to recommendations by the Committee, the task of formalising the wording of those changes is

delegated to the Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration along the broad lines indicated at the meeting; and

2. In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration is delegated authority to do so, provided always that the Corporate Director does not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.
3. To note the procedure for hearing objections at meetings for the Strategic Development Committee.

4. DEFERRED ITEMS

4.1 PA/22/00731: 4-5 Harbour Exchange Square

Paul Buckenham introduced the application to grant planning permission for the demolition of the existing building and erection of a mixed-use residential led building containing 450 residential units (Class C3) and new podium level to accommodate flexible retail, community, creative, and amenity uses (Class E and F2) as well as basement level blue-badge parking, new public realm and landscaping, and all associated works.

Jane Jin provided a presentation to accompany the application. And reminded the Committee of the scheme, which proposes 450 residential units with 120 affordable housing units, which equates to 35% affordable housing by habitable rooms.

It was noted that this application for planning permission was considered by the Strategic Development Committee on 16 July 2024. The application was deferred for a site visit, so that Members could better understand the likely construction impacts arising from the proposed development. The site visit was held on 22 August 2024.

Only Members physically present at the 28 August meeting were permitted to vote on this application.

Further to the presentation, the Committee asked questions to Officers regarding the following issues;

- Confirmed that the applicant will not alter the scheme which is compliant with the current local plan in terms of the number of dwelling mix within the scheme and Officers are satisfied with the current proposal.
- Clarified that the development will take approximately five years to complete.

- Explained that it is not possible to alter the impact of the development with a request for more family-sized units, as these have already been addressed by conditions indicated in the application.

Following the questions, Officers assured the Committee that conditions are in place.

On a unanimous vote of 8 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions the Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. That planning permission be **GRANTED** for the proposed development at 4 & 5 Harbour Exchange Square, London E14 9TQ
2. Subject to planning conditions and obligations listed in the report.
3. The outcome of the Stage 2 referral to the Mayor of London.

4.2 **PA/21/02707: Whitechapel Road Development Site, Whitechapel Road, London E1 2BB**

Councillor Saied Ahmed and Councillor Kamrul Hussain recused themselves from item 4.2 and Councillor Ahmodur Khan and Councillor Suluk Ahmed were replaced as substitutes. They both introduced themselves and had no disclosable pecuniary interests to declare. Councillor Sabina Khan also recused herself, as she was virtually present for the meeting on 28 August when this application was initially submitted and is unable to vote. Councillor Mufeedah Bustin introduced herself for this item, as she was physically present at the 28 August meeting. She had no disclosable pecuniary interests to declare.

Update report noted.

Paul Buckenham introduced the application to grant planning permission with obligations for the redevelopment of site involving erection of five buildings and retention of one building for provision of up to 69,033 sqm (GIA) of Class E(g) space for flexible life science purpose uses; and provision of up to 6,363 sqm (GIA) flexible Class E supporting uses and Class F1 and Class F2 supporting uses (gallery/ exhibition/ community uses); up to 2,820 sqm (GIA) F1(a) for research and development and teaching activities in the life science sector; with associated landscaping; public realm and highway works; re-provision of existing on-street car parking; and erection of a single pavilion building comprising up to 759 sqm (GIA) Class E(b) café use with ancillary storage, and Sui Generis use (public toilets) set within a new landscaped open square.

The development is to involve erection of a building up to 4 storeys on Plot A (including top storey plant); and erection of two buildings (on Plots B1 and B3) of 4 storeys rising to 8 storeys respectively (the latter including top storey

plant) including the demolition of former Outpatient's Building Annexe and part demolition/part retention of main former Outpatient's Building; and on Plot B2 the retention of the Ambrose King building. The development is to also involve the erection of a 7 storey building (including top storey plant) on Plot C (45.9m AOD); and erection of 15 storey building (including 2 top storeys of plant) on Plot D1 (78.7m AOD).

Gareth Gwynne provided a presentation to accompany the application. Members noted at the last committee a desire to understand the public benefits of the scheme and expressed concerns around those, including the level of apprenticeships. The applicant has now secured an end phase apprenticeships, which was a previously proposed.

It was noted that this application was initially considered by the Strategic Development Committee on 28 August 2024. The application was deferred for a site visit, which took place on 24 September 2024.

Shahi Mofozil, Senior Manager, Business Growth, Growth & Economic Development Division, outlined the component mix between wet and dry lab spaces, which is currently in high demand. It was noted that the scheme has been secured as a rounded mix of affordable workspace, which is in line with or exceeds the discounted rent levels in the Local Plan. The fit out requirements and available space provision. It also provides benefits to local businesses and residents.

The office space proposed will offer discounts that go beyond the current policy and is more in line with the draft Local Plan. Pathways will also be developed into the Life Sciences provision for local residents and businesses. The offer of end-phase apprenticeships will also give residents the opportunity to acquire local jobs.

Aelswith Frayne, the Head of Employment and Skills, Growth & Economic Development, then discussed the Council's ambitions to create a career and social mobility program for local residents. The proposed scheme provides primary and secondary school pupils access to information, guidance, career pathway information in STEM subjects and support for teachers' within schools through the Life Science development.

Dr Somen Banerjee, Director of Public Health, then discussed the importance of the Life Science sector in analysing how people self-care and how genetics is used to target interventions in health conditions. Members were informed how blood pressure medication has identified ethnic differences which determines its effectiveness. A Benefits Realisation Group will be created in collaboration with the Council, Barts NHS Trust, Queen Mary's Hospital and the Primary Care teams. This will enable innovative research to benefit residents prior to other local authorities and prevent the current health disparities facing the borough.

Emily Humphries, Public Health's Associate Director, Public Health, informed Members that the Community involvement Centre proposed as part of the

scheme will assist in developing local health and wellbeing projects for the borough. The centre and proposed funding will support the community.

Only members physically present at the 28 August meeting were permitted to vote on this application.

Following questions from the Committee, Officers:

- Acknowledged that there will be some adverse daylight/sunlight impacts to the rear of Gwynne House and in total four major adverse impacts. Details of the assessments used to measure any adverse impacts were outlined.
- Confirmed that one of the planning obligations for the applicant is to have at target of 25% of jobs for local residents.
- It was clarified that the Life Science development will study and treat many common conditions residents face.
- Explained the training opportunities available for local residents, including the STEM Outreach Programme, the Ambassador program, the end phased apprenticeships which accompany the financial contributions.
- Noted that the section 106 obligations include an Architectural Retention Clause, to maintain the quality and character of the building and its surroundings.
- Clarified that a Secure by Design condition on the landscape and Public Realm is in place to ensure that there are no features included that might attract antisocial behaviour. A Management Plan will also be imposed on the applicant to maintain the Public Realm and landscaping.
- Noted the difference between the first daylight / sunlight assessment and the second. The first, which is a Vertical Sky Component (VSC) assessment, measures the amount of daylight arriving at a window and the proportion of sky space visible. The second, a No-Sky Line (NSL) assessment, measures the amount of light that is present in the room.

Following questions from the Committee, The Chair proposed three amendments to the planning conditions:

- To amend the planning obligation to contribute £2.5 million towards the Women's Health Community research be worded more flexibly to say £2.5 million towards Community Health and Well-being projects.

- To clarify that the Community Involvement Centre is being offered at a 20 year lease on a peppercorn and that the Council has exclusive use and oversight on the space and can rent it out.
- That the planning obligations be amended to provide a commuted sum in lieu of the affordable workspace and delegate responsibilities to agree the financial amount due to the Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration and Officers to provide a report back to the Committee, if the amendments cannot be agreed with the applicant.

The Chair then requested the Committee to vote on this before giving a final vote on the application. Paul Buckenham and the Chair discussed some of the implications on the third amendment. The law states that planning obligations must be necessary to the development, be acceptable and reasonably related in scale to the development.

The Local Plan policy states that obligations can be utilised to secure affordable workspace at rent maintained below the market rate and that the space meets specific social, cultural or economic development objectives. Tower Hamlets local plan states that within major commercial and mixed-use developments, at least 10% of the new employment space should be provided as affordable. It goes on to state that If the affordable works space cannot be provided on site in exceptional circumstances, then a cash in lieu contribution could be taken instead.

It was noted that application will have to be referred back to the Mayor of London for review with the specifics of the exception if the Committee votes on this amendment. This will also depend on whether the applicant agrees to the proposed conditions. Members were informed that the proposed scheme adheres to the law and the Council's Local Plan policy and advised the Committee against the third amendment.

Officers suggested Members adjourn to discuss the legal implications prior to a vote on the amendments to the obligations, before a final vote is taken on the application.

The Committee **Adjourned** for a short while then **Reconvened**.

Paul Buckenham advised Members that in regards to the third amendment clarification from the applicant is required. If the vote is taken to approve the amendment, it would be allocated to Offices to discuss with the applicant and obtain additional legal advice. Officers would then inform the Committee of any changes, including bringing the application back to the Committee if the applicant opposed the additional amendment.

On a vote of 5 in favour, 1 against and 0 abstentions, the Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. To amend the planning obligation to contribute £2.5 million towards the Women's Health Community research be worded more flexibly to say £2.5 million towards the Community Health and Well-being projects.

On a vote of 6 in favour, 1 against and 0 abstentions, the Committee **RESOLVED**:

2. To clarify that the Community Involvement Centre is being offered at a 20 year lease on a peppercorn and that the Council has exclusive use and oversight on the space and can rent it out.

On a vote of 5 in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions, the Committee **RESOLVED**:

3. That the planning obligations be amended to provide a commuted sum in lieu of the affordable workspace and delegate responsibilities to agree the financial amount due to the Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration and Officers to provide a report back to the Committee, if the amendments cannot be agreed with the applicant.

On a vote of 5 in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions, the Committee **RESOLVED**:

4. That planning permission be **GRANTED** for development at Whitechapel Road Development Site, Whitechapel Road, London, E1 2BB subject to:
 - Planning obligations and conditions set out in the report and amended by the Committee.
 - The outcome of the Stage 2 Referral to the Mayor of London.

The Committee **Adjourned** again for a short while, then **Reconvened**.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

5.1 PA/22/01749: Blackwall Way Jetty, Blackwall Way

Councillor Ahmodur Khan and Councillor Suluk Ahmed both left the meeting. Councillor Sabina Khan reintroduced herself to the Committee, as did Councillor Kamrul Hussain. Councillor Kabir Hussain then introduced himself. None of the Councillors had any disclosable pecuniary interests to declare, however, Councillor Kamrul Hussain declared he received emails from residents in regards to the application.

Paul Buckenham introduced the application to grant permission for minor material amendments to planning permission Ref: PA/21/00288, Dated 14/07/2022: Amendment(s) sought: Amendment to the wording of Condition 22 – Operational Requirements.

Aleksandra Milentijevic provided a presentation to accompany the application, which highlighted the proposal's site and surroundings. Details on the consented jetty structure were noted and Members were informed that the proposed changes include a variation of the Section 73 condition, the operating requirements for the Jetty noted in Condition 22. The Committee heard that no changes have been proposed to the physical extent of the structure.

Ms Milentijevic then presented an overview of the consented wording of Condition 22, which indicated the operating hours for Uber boats, the movements of the Thames Clipper and the engine capacity for all vessels approaching and leaving the jetty.

The Committee was informed of the proposed wording of Condition 22, which indicated the average engine emissions at full power, the vessels' annual average daily traffic, and the maximum hourly boat movements from 23:00hrs and 06.00 hours. Details of the public consultation were included, including the press release, site notice, and 483 letters sent to neighbouring properties.

The Committee heard that 293 representations were received, with 196 in objection and 97 in support. Since the release of the report 9 additional representations were received. The consultation related to the existing issues in the area, the general planning matters in regards to the procedure of Section 73, comments on assessments undertaken, the air quality, noise levels, amenity and safety concerns, ecology, transport and heritage issues. The objections raised related to the impact on ecology and increased foot traffic.

Ms Milentijevic informed the Committee that the applicant submitted an additional air quality assessment, which included the change in pollutant concentration of less than 1%. A pollutant dispersion assessment was also conducted, to examine the consented versus proposed emissions changes, A Carbon Strategy condition has been applied to the application to determine if carbon neutral energy is feasible for vehicles in the future.

Noise assessment and noise modelling was undertaken, the latter tests the number of hourly vehicle movements taking place at the jetty and showed that up to 70 vehicle movements could potentially take place without causing significant adverse effects to neighbouring properties.

Regarding amenity concerns related to the types of boats the jetty would accommodate; an additional condition has now been placed to prohibit private boat hire from stopping or departing at the jetty and restricted access via lockable gates will be in place. To summarise, Ms Milentijevic recommended minor material amendments to planning permission be granted.

The Chair invited Keith MacLean, representing residents of New Providence Wharf, to speak in objection to the application. Mr MacLean highlighted the following concerns:

- Noted that residents were not approached by the applicant or the consultants regarding the aforementioned assessments and have made assumptions and assertions to residents.
- Section 73 should not be used for fundamental alterations and stated that Officers must only consider the potential impact of the proposed changes to the conditions. The emissions will double compared to the original amendment.
- The basis for the consented operational arrangement is unrealistic and a baseline of the 2019 figures should be used. The change in operating hours will result in an increase in noise levels.

The Chair next invited Ashley Lumsden, Chair of London City Island Residents Association, to speak in objection to the application. Mr MacLean highlighted the following concerns:

- Condition A: Average Engine Emissions at Full Power: 8,317 g/hr. This does not specify what type of emissions they are nor allow understanding of the impact to the environment. This should be altered to include specific emissions.
- Condition B: Vessel annual average daily traffic (AADT) flow of 212, allowing for passenger service boat, excluding private boat hire, movements to and from the jetty to account for 106 unique stops at the jetty. This does not permit four movements per hour nor adequately regulate the service and therefore should be removed.
- Condition C: Maximum hourly boat movements of up to 6 per hour between 23:00 and 06:00 not exceeding SEL/LAE 73 dB per movement, as measured during the boats departure at a distance of approximately 70m from the pier. This condition should be maintained.

The Chair next invited Ralph Hardwick, to speak in objection to the application. Mr Hardwick highlighted the following concerns:

- Reference to the Thames Path is incorrect. This specific jetty stops at Island Gardens on the north side of the river, this is a riverside walkway.
- Both the London Plan and Local Plan states that developments must be air quality neutral or air quality positive. Additional vessels would invalidate this, as there should be no additional emissions permitted. A concession permitted in the initial Condition 22 stated that only vessels with IMO Tier three emissions can arrive and depart at that jetty. Currently only 4 Thames Clippers only have 4 vessels which comply with this.

- There appears to be a lack of ambition from Tower Hamlets Council to ensure the vessels have low emissions or electric driven, so residents are protected from adverse air and noise pollution.

The Chair then invited Alex Portlock, Senior Development Manager from Hadley Blackwall Yard Properties, Jeff Simons, Chief Operating Officer, Uber Boats Thames Clippers Jonathan Roynon and Danny Fiumicelli from Buro Happold, to speak in favour of the application:

- The parameters of the initial consented condition would have significantly reduced passenger river boat services at this pier and affect other services in the area. The wording of the condition has been achieved using existing vessel data and analytics, to keep emission levels low. The air quality of background would be reduced by 1% when assessed against existing levels.
- Uber Boat Thames Clipper has launched three new hybrid vessels which use sustainable fuels. The revised wording will ensure continued operation of the boats and connect this part of the river to the existing river network and ease the pressures on other transportation services.
- Thames Clippers has held a Transport for London licence to operate since 2000 and delivers services to 24 piers carrying around 5 million passengers along 30km of the Thames. The Blackwall Yard Jetty will provide valued transport links to the area and residents with a cross river connection to the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
- Thames Clippers collaborate with the private sector and do not receive any financial assistance from the public. The first hybrid high speed vessel in Europe was delivered by Thames Clippers and added two more boats to the service. A fully electric cross river vessel is now in production for the Canary Wharf and Rotherhithe route, which will be in operation by 2025.
- Thames Clippers aims to reduce net emissions by 50% in 2030 and net zero emissions by 2040. The fleet already passes the site at a higher frequency than the current permitted condition, so it will not be doubling emissions if this amended condition was to be approved.

The Committee were asked to vote on hearing the remainder of the application, since the meeting was nearing 3 hours. Members voted to continue.

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin and Councillor Kabir Hussain both declared that they had previously met Jeff Simons in relation to other sites. Further to the presentation, the Committee asked questions to objectors, the applicant and officers regarding the following issues;

- Confirmed that the amended wording of the condition will enable the Thames Clipper service to depart and arrive at the Jetty. All vessels return back to Trinity Bouy Wharf Head base at the end of the service, passing the jetty.
- Clarified that the emitted pollutant is Nitrogen Oxide (NOx). Other pollutants include fine particulate matter, or sulphur dioxide which are produced from vessels running off diesel.
- Explained that the noise assessments to measure the noise levels produced from the Clipper approaching, leaving and passing a cruising speed at Surrey Quays jetty were conducted. It also included noise levels of passengers disembarking the jetty. Findings showed no change in levels on the bank from a distance from around 70 metres. As the jetty projects towards the river, the noise levels reduce considerably as it gets to the bank.
- Confirmed that air quality assessments were conducted on vessels moving in the Thames and showed a net decrease in pollutants emitted. There are impacts from the vessels slowing down and speeding up, however this is a less than 1% change.
- Confirmed the fleet consists of three hybrid boats running on H3O fuel, and electric vessels in the central zone. These are the first of its time and are currently developing a fully electric vehicle for the Canary Wharf and Rotherhithe route.
- Explained that the route starts from Putney to Barking Riverside and this stop will provide a fast link cross river to Greenwich. This will reduce journey times and give enable new travel connections across the river.

Following the points raised by Officers, the Committee debated the application and noted the following:

- Further clarification required on the wording of the proposed condition.
- Further clarification on the air quality and noise pollution.

The Chair requested to defer the application and was seconded by Councillor Gulam Choudhury.

Upon a vote of 7 in favour it was therefore **RESOLVED**;

1. That consideration of the application be **DEFERRED** for further information to clarify the impact on resident in terms of air quality and noise.

The meeting ended at 10.04 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Amin Rahman

Strategic Development Committee