

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 14 JULY 2021

**COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury
Councillor David Edgar
Councillor Sabina Akhtar
Councillor Tarik Khan
Councillor Val Whitehead

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Ehtasham Haque

Apologies:

Councillor Rabina Khan

Officers Present:

Gareth Gwynne	– (Area Planning Manager (West), Planning Services, Place)
James Woolway	– (Senior Planning Officer, Place)
Siddhartha Jha	– (Principal Planning Lawyer, Governance, Legal Services)
Jane Jin	– (Team Leader, Planning Services, Place)
Zoe Folley	– (Democratic Services Officer, Committees, Governance)

**1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND
OTHER INTERESTS**

Councillor Sabina Akhtar declared a Non DPI interest in agenda 5.1 Land at Blackwall Yard, Blackwall Way, London, E14 2EH (PA/20/02509). This was on the grounds that he husband, Councillor Ehtasham Haque was speaking in support of the application. She considered that she could consider the application with an open mind.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The Committee **RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Strategic Development Committee held on 9th June 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROCEDURE FOR HEARING OBJECTIONS AND MEETING GUIDANCE

To RESOLVE 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 Place 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 Place 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 of the Strategic Development Committee.

4. DEFERRED ITEMS

There were none.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

5.1 Land at Blackwall Yard, Blackwall Way, London, E14 2EH (PA/20/02509)

Gareth Gwynne (Area Planning Manager (West), Planning Services, Place) introduced the application for planning and listed building consent for the phased redevelopment of the site and construction of 5 buildings (with maximum heights of between 9 and 39 storeys) comprising a mixed used residential led scheme with associated works. He also advised of a number of corrections to the paragraph numbers in the Committee report and that the heritage assessment should refer to section 196 of the National Planning Framework and not the Planning Act.

James Woolway (Senior Planning Officer (East Team)) introduced the report, advising of the character of the site, the surrounding area and the key features of the scheme. There had been extensive consultation. 24 letters of objection had been received. The issues raised were noted around such matters as sunlight and daylight impacts, increased Anti – Social Behaviour

(ASB) , bulk scale and massing. 83 representations in support were also received. In terms of the land use, the scheme would provide over 1,500sqm of commercial and retail spaces spread throughout the scheme, creating new jobs. This had been supported by a Retail Impact Assessment showing that the proposals would not undermine nearby centres. This was strongly supported

The plans sought to deliver new homes, including a policy compliant mix of affordable housing at 35% with a 70:30 split in favour of social rented tenure. (263 new affordable homes within the scheme). The affordable housing would be truly integrated into the scheme. Officers were mindful of the shortfall of family housing in the private housing mix. However, on balance it was felt that the overall housing mix was acceptable.

The quality of the accommodation would be high. The development would also provide generous levels of play space, communal amenity space and publicly accessible open space. The residents of all the tenures would have access to the bulk of the communal amenity space. The level of child play space met policy requirements and there would be an off site contribution for works to offset this shortfall.

The scheme would deliver a number of other benefits and this included:

- A 2FE primary school or an alternative community use that would be secured by the s106.
- The delivery of a 'Community Hub' within the primary plot on site which will allow for public access and utility for local residents in addition to those of Blackwall Yard.
- The provision of a Multi – Use Games Area (MUGA) to allow for external access out of hours.
- Restoration and enhancement of the Grade II Listed Blackwall Yard Graving Dock which has not benefitted from public access for a considerable length of time.
- Improved linkages and public access through the site.
- Biodiversity enhancements, including the provision of new trees and meadow land

Careful consideration had been given to the heritage assessment. Overall, Officers considered that on balance the likely planning benefits of the proposal would outweigh the less than substantial harm to heritage assets. The application had been accompanied by a detailed heritage assessment.

It was also confirmed that 5 buildings would be provided, at heights ranging from 9 and 39 storeys. The approach in terms of cascading the buildings complied with policy whilst maximising the development potential of the site. The development would be of a high quality design. Details of the design features were noted. These sought to reflect the heritage of the site.

The plans would not result in any undue impacts in terms of overlooking and privacy due to the separation distances. The scheme would cause some daylight and sunlight impacts to neighbouring properties. Details of these

were noted including the impacts to John Smith Mews. It was also confirmed that in some cases, the presence of existing site constraints (such as balconies) already restricted sunlight and daylight levels to properties. It was also noted that the scheme had been carefully designed in such a way to minimise the impacts. It was also noted that some impacts to these properties were inevitable with any development of the site given the vacant nature of the site and the proximity of these properties to the site. Overall, the harm caused by the development must be balanced against the site allocation requirements and the public benefits. Taking this into account, officers considered this on balance to be acceptable.

In transport terms, the proposal was considered to be acceptable, given that the plans sought to promote substantiable transport.

The environmental impacts had been carefully assessed, and appropriate mitigations and monitoring measures will be secured.

Details of the financial and non - financial contributions were also noted, and that the development would be liable for Tower Hamlets Community Infrastructure Levy payments.

Officers were recommending that the application was granted.

Councillor Ehtasham Haque, a ward Councillor addressed the Committee, in support of the application. He declared an interest as his wife Councillor Sabina Akhtar was a Member of the Strategic Development Committee. He spoke in support of the application on the grounds that:

- This was an important addition to the Island, in particular he welcomed the plans to improve permeability and connections.
- It would provide much needed public open space
- He was pleased to see that the applicant had engaged with the community including the residents most affected. He welcomed their commitment to creating a single community and to continuing to engage with the residents most affected.
- He welcomed the level of SME and start up business space.

The Committee asked a number of questions of officers around the following issues.

- The plans to provide a Community Hub. The Committee sought assurances regarding: it's availability to everyone in the community, the affordability of the rent levels and hire costs and how this would be monitored. Clarity was also sought about its ownership and the management arrangements.
- Members also welcomed the proposal to open the MUGA/ sports pitches out of school hours and sought assurances on how this would be managed and secured.
- In response Officer provided further details of the community hub, to be located in plot 1 (as a private block rather than a community centre).

The applicant would own the hub and the MUGA - with the aspiration of making it as accessible as possible to the wider community and providing a public utility for local residents. They would also be required to provide the fit out costs for the Community Hub. Regarding the MUGA, an operator had yet to be appointed however it was expected that they will work with the Applicant to facilitate public access.

- This offer by the applicant went above and beyond the site allocation requirements. The Committee may however add an additional condition regarding the Community Hub covering such issues as public access, rent levels, the review arrangements and that it be secured for the lifetime of the development.
- The concerns around increased ASB from the public house and use of the Thames Pathway given its proximity to residential development. It was noted that the hours of operation of the public house would be controlled by condition. Conditions would also be secured to ensure that the development would be Secure by Design, and to require that a lighting strategy would be submitted to prevent light spillage to the river, whilst illuminating the area.
- It was also proposed that a Management Strategy be submitted detailing the opening hours of Meridian Gardens.
- It was also envisaged that the development should improve passive overlooking of the Thames Pathway.
- Public safety issues in relation to outdoor swimming. It was noted that safety measures would be secured to manage this issue
- The off – site contribution for play space and the 5 year maintenance obligation. The Committee noted the proposed maintenance arrangements, following the expiry of this 5 year period.
- The measures to provide a tenure blind development. It was noted that whilst the Council had limited control over the internal features, the accommodation should be of the same high standard especially given the provision of mixed tenure cores in this case.
- The heritage assessment, particularly the comments from Historic England regarding the need to reveal more of the Grade 11 Listed Graving Dock. Officers had carefully looked at this issue with the relevant experts. Overall, taking into account the limited benefits of this request, and the negative consequences (in terms of the public benefits), officers felt that it would not be reasonable to request this. The public benefits of the scheme were considered to outweigh any harm to the dock.
- The need for the new school in view of the pupil projections. It was noted that the projections supplied by the LBTH Education Team showed that a new school would need to be provided - around the time this development would be built out.
- A condition would also be included in the s106 to require that should a school no longer need to be provided, a community use will be provided. Details of which would need to be approved by the Council.
- The management of the proposed stack parking system. The Committee sought assurances around this and agreed to add an additional condition as set out in the resolutions below.

- The affordability of the commercial rent levels for local businesses and SMEs. It was questioned if a percentage of the space could be offered at discount rates to local businesses. It was noted that due to the scale and location of the business space, that it should attract SMEs and that it should lend itself to SMEs. It was also noted due to the quantum of such space to be provided, that it did not meet the criteria in policy for requiring this.

Councillor Sabina Akhtar moved and Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE seconded an additional condition regarding the management of the Community Hub which is detailed below. This was agreed.

Councillor Val Whitehead moved and Councillor Kahar Chowdhury seconded an additional non financial contribution regarding the ongoing maintenance of the parking stacking system and this was agreed.

On a unanimous vote the Committee RESOLVED:

1. That subject to any direction by the Mayor of London, conditional planning permission and listed building consent is GRANTED subject to the prior completion of a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations set out in the committee report including the additional non - financial obligation agreed by the Committee regarding the maintenance of the parking stacking system for the lifetime of the development
2. That the Corporate Director of Place is delegated the power to negotiate the legal agreement. If within three months of the resolution the legal agreement has not been completed, the Corporate Director for Place is delegated power to refuse planning permission.
3. That the Corporate Director of Place is delegated the power to impose planning and listed building conditions and informatives to address the matters set out in the report including the additional condition agreed by the Committee regarding the Community Hub covering the following:

The submission of strategy including details of the

- Rents levels.
- The booking process.
- Public access

A requirement to submit an annual monitoring report to review the above.

That the Community Hub be secured for the lifetime of the development.

The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

Chair,
Strategic Development Committee