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MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE Wednesday, 31 July 2024 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Jack Lavery (Chair), Peter Bernard's (Vice-Chair), Liam Curran, John Paschoud and Kim Powell

ALSO PRESENT: Michael Forrester - Head of Development Management, David Robinson - Major and Strategic Projects Manager, Nick Fenwick - Director of Planning, Emma Campbell Smith – Head of Governance and Committee Services, Sarah White – Womble Bond Dickinson (Legal Advisor), James Brierley – Gerald Eve (Viability Consultant), Jordana Malik – Renewal Group (Applicant), Councillor Liam Shrivastava - Ward Councillor for New Cross Gate

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Suzannah Clarke and Councillor Edison Huynh

1. **Declarations of Interests**

None.

2. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. **Land at Surrey Canal Road, Stockholm Road, Bolina Road and Rolins Street, London SE15 and SE16**

3.1 Following a welcome from the Chair and introductions, the Planning Officer summarised the key aspects of the report as follows:

- This was a hybrid planning application, split between a full planning application for Phase 1 of the scheme and an outline planning application for Phases 2-5.
- The application had previously been referred to the Strategic Planning Committee in January 2022. Since then, there had been changes to funding arrangements of the planned Surrey Canal Overground Station. The council had been working with the Developer to reach an agreement whereby the Developer would contribute £17.17m towards the development of station, which would result in a reduction in the number of affordable housing units provided under the scheme.
- A visual overview of the proposed development, site photos, and map were shown
- The site was one of five strategic development sites for the Borough.
- The development would see the delivery of two clusters of tall buildings, peaking in Phases 2 to 5, enhancement of Bridge House Meadows, delivery of new areas of public realm squares, improved transport links.

- The impact of the Developer's proposed station contribution would result in a reduction of 100 affordable homes in Phase 2. There would be no changes to Phases 3-5's affordable housing.
- The revised plans also included a second means of escape to the Phase 1 development, with the inclusion of a double stairs instead of a single, with no reduction in the number of units and preservation of light sources.
- The development would be a key part of delivering the borough's housing targets, with Phase 1 amounting to 35% of Lewisham's annual housing target, and the overall scheme amounting to some 21% of the borough's 10 year target.

3.2 The Planning Officer correct the following errors in the report:

- At Paragraph 9 reference to updated affordable housing quantum at 39%. The correct figure should be 35.8% when calculated by habitable room. The total affordable housing figures are correct ie Phase 1 would deliver 200 homes, and a further 932 affordable homes would be delivered across Phases 2-5.
- Table 3, below para 174, the trigger for Surrey Canal Station payment would be at 600 units rather than 75% of units.

3.3 The Planning Officer added that, for completeness, the report should be read in conjunction with the meeting papers of the SPC meeting in January 2022.

3.4 The Chair thanked the Planning Officer for the presentation, and encouraged Members to put any questions to the Officer, focusing on the changes to the previous application rather than revisiting the elements of the original application, which had been agreed, that remained unchanged.

3.5 In response to questions from the Committee, the following was noted:

3.5.1 It was difficult to provide certainty around delivery of the new station. Neither the applicant nor the council would be responsible for delivering the station. This version of the scheme was higher density than the application granted in January 2022, with more affordable housing. TfL had reallocated funding for the station to other projects so TfL funding was secured for the delivery of Surrey Canal Station (SCS). TfL had advised that secured local funding would be required to make SCS an attractive funding proposition to government.

3.5.2 The Applicant had modelled their proposal on the basis of the station being in place. With the station, the scheme is acceptable.

3.5.3 The council had already made a significant financial contribution towards SCS in 2012 when the overground line was being built. As a result, the station viaduct exists but without any entrance, lifts, etc

- 3.5.4 Phase 1 would be delivered ahead of the station. The Developer's contribution would be payable upon completion of 600 homes, which is the entirety of Phase 1. TfL have estimated that the station would cost £38m from contract award to completion. It was not possible to give any certainty over timelines at this stage.
- 3.5.5 The scheme would be possible without SCS however it would require an additional transport strategy, for example including new bus routes and more frequent bus services. However, this was not within the gift of the committee at this stage.
- 3.5.6 One Member commented that they were pleased to see the upgrade of Bridge House Meadows early in the development, scheduled for delivery in Phase 2.
- 3.5.7 The proposed leisure provision – swimming pool and sports auditorium – would be privately owned but subsidised for discounted resident and student fees through the use of s106 funding.
- 3.6 There being no further questions at this stage for the Planning Officer, the Chair invited the Applicant to address the Committee.
- 3.7 The Applicant explained that Renewal was a family run company that had owned the site for 20 years. Consent had been granted for the scheme 2 years ago. Complex issues including the emerging changes to Building Regulations and high construction and inflation costs had posed some challenges.
- 3.8 The revised application had resolved the station funding framework, and in planning terms would mean that the Developer could deliver Phase 1 without the station. However, the Developer would not start on site without the contract for the station being let, since commercial viability was reliant on the station.
- 3.9 The impact of the station funding on the affordable housing element of the scheme was mitigated by a robust mechanism to claw back the loss from Phase 2 during Phases 3-5.
- 3.10 The scheme could not move forward without planning consent being granted. This would be instrumental in unlocking TfL funding for the station.
- 3.11 The Chair thanked the Applicant for their presentation and invited the Committee to put any questions to the Applicant. The following was noted in response to Members' questions:
- 3.11.1 There would be a 17% reduction of affordable housing in Phase 2. Of the 17%, 60% would be social housing, 40% would be intermediate. The Developer supported Lewisham's policy of delivering mixed and balanced communities, and would keep the reduction manageable in one phase

rather than slicing across all five. In Phase 1, one tower would be fully affordable. It would be very difficult to split it from a management point of view. Therefore reduction the provision in Phase 2 was the most workable solution.

- 3.11.2 The Applicant had appointed agents Jones Lang Lasalle and Kalmars to look at demand locally for the pool and auditorium space. There was interest locally for a flexibly auditorium space that could be used for a range of purposes including fashion shows, graduations, sports fixtures etc. It would be a commercial enterprise operated commercially. The Developer had met with potential operators but without planning consent in place, there was interest but no definite plans. The Developer would retain the freehold interest in the commercial elements and lease them individually during each phase to each operator.
- 3.11.3 Phase 3 would involve the delivery of sports facilities with residential properties above. The site was not suitable for large retail provision, to protect the nearby Surrey Quays shopping centre and the retail provision at New Cross. Sports facilities were in demand in the area due to the young population in the area and the lack of publicly accessible sports facilities nearby. Currently, some of the big sheds on Surrey Canal Road were leased to London Thunder basketball club and to a table tennis club.
- 3.11.4 In terms of an indicative timetable for starting construction, it was anticipated that enabling works and letting of contracts would take place during 2025, with construction on site commencing in 2026. The towers would be an estimated 2 year build, and the design repeated, therefore the construction phase would be as quick as possible. The auditorium would essentially be a box built around the tower structure. This would result in the first residents moving in in 2028.
- 3.11.5 Approximately one third of the station – the “passive provision” had already been built. The remainder would be built at night, to enable existing services to continue to run, and would take approximately 2-3 years to build.
- 3.11.6 The Applicant said that TfL had been clear that TfL could not approach the Department for Transport for additional funding for SCS without planning consent for the scheme. The Developer’s view was that if the funding agreement was signed, and the contract let, the build could go ahead. However, if the station was mothballed, the commercial viability would not be there for the developer.
- 3.12 There were no objectors present at the meeting. Councillor Liam Shrivastava, the Ward Councillor for New Cross Gate ward was present online and, with the Chair’s consent, made the following points:
- 3.12.1 Ward residents had mixed feelings on scheme. Within the ward of New Cross Gate there was a lack of provision for doctors, pharmacies, sports and leisure facilities.

- 3.12.2 The ward councillor welcomed the plans to transform the area, and particularly liked the sports provision.
- 3.12.3 Some residents, for example those on the Winslade Estate, felt they were being subjected to disruption from constant development all around them, due not only nearby development but also to those just over the borough boundary in Southwark. Residents had some nervousness about being enveloped by very tall buildings and potentially losing light. One objector had felt there had been inadequate public consultation.
- 3.13 The Chair invited the Planning Officer to respond to the points raised by the Ward Councillor. The Committee heard that health facility provision was planned for Phase 4, depending on the need at that time. The Planning Officer also explained that paragraph 969 of the January 2022 report detailed the extensive testing and that no changes to the envelope or heights had been proposed. The Planning Officer informed the Committee that seven objections had been received, and seven expressions of support, and these were summarised in para 119 of the January 2022 report. Lastly, the Planning Officer clarified that the planned tenure mix across the entire scheme would be 60% social rent and 40% intermediate housing.
- 3.14 James Brierley, of Gerald Eve, the council's viability consultant, explained that the figure of 100 affordable homes reduction in Phase 2 had been arrived at by a relatively simple calculation, being the cost of the station funding balanced against the cost of delivering the affordable housing element.
- 3.15 The Chair invited the Applicant to respond to the points raised by the Ward Councillor. The committee heard that the scheme had been designed to step down in height towards the Winslade Estate and the improvement of Bridge House Meadows and extension to Lovelinch Close would make a big improvement to area. The plans had been designed to 'knit' Winslade Estate into the public realm
- 3.16 The Applicant explained that the 40% intermediate housing was to be determined, and could potentially be offered on a shared ownership basis or through a scheme called First Steps. The committee heard an example of a scheme run by Barratt Homes where properties were offered at a 30% reduction and a discount on market rent.
- 3.17 The Planning Officer clarified that discussions around splitting the 40% intermediate housing were ongoing and therefore it would be submitted as a reserved matter.
- 3.18 The Chair invited final questions from the Committee. There was concern that the long and complex history of the site's development should not be lost. The Planning Officer explained that as the full planning application for each stage was submitted, the developer would have to submit a reconciliation statement, which included a significant amount of ongoing monitoring requirements ongoing, informing the council as contracts are let and completed. The Planning Officer was confident that there would be sufficient checks and balances built into the legal agreement with the Developer to ensure that this concern would not be realised.

3.19 There being no further questions for the Planning Officer or the Applicant, Cllr John Paschoud proposed, Cllr Curran seconded and, following a show of hands, the Committee unanimously RESOLVED:

- 1 To agree the proposals and refer the application, the report considered at the meeting of Lewisham Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 31 July 2024 (“the report”) and any other required documents to the Mayor of London (Greater London Authority) under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008; and
- 2 Subject to no direction being received from the Mayor of London, to authorise the Director of Law and Corporate Governance to complete a legal agreement under Section 106 of the 1990 Act (and other appropriate powers) to cover the principal matters as set out in the report, including other such amendments as considered appropriate to ensure the acceptable implementation of the development; and
- 3 Subject to completion of a satisfactory legal agreement, to authorise the Head of Planning to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to conditions including those set out in the report and such amendments as considered appropriate to ensure the acceptable implementation of the development.

The meeting ended at 20:18