

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS PANEL

MINUTES

30 MARCH 2011

Chairman: * Councillor Bill Stephenson

Councillors: * Keith Ferry * Barry Macleod-Cullinane
* Susan Hall * Bill Phillips (1)
* Thaya Idaikkadar * Anthony Seymour (2)

* Denotes Member present
(1) and (2) Denote category of Reserve Members

35. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Tony Ferrari
Councillor Phillip O'Dell

Reserve Member

Councillor Anthony Seymour
Councillor Bill Phillips

36. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 7 – Kodak: Update on the Design Workshops

Councillor Susan Hall declared a personal interest in that she had a business in Wealdstone. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 9 – Bradstowe House

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane declared a personal interest in that he had once contacted the developers with regard to buying a property in

Bradstowe House. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

37. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2011 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

38. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rules 51, 49 and 50 (Part 4D of the Constitution) respectively.

RESOLVED ITEMS

39. Kodak: Update on the Design Workshops

The Divisional Director of Planning introduced Stephen Neal of Land Securities.

Mr Neal reminded the Panel that at its last meeting it had received a presentation on the public exhibitions on the Kodak site. Since then, there had been a second stage of public consultation with 8 design workshops. He introduced Andy Martin of PPS, who gave an oral presentation on the outcome of the workshops.

Mr Martin advised that some of the over-arching views arising from the workshops, which had been well attended, were as follows:

- there was a need to ensure that the proposals coming forward were genuinely mixed use;
- the principle of a 'green link' through the site and into the wider area was very popular;
- sustainability and employment were regarded as critical by most people;
- there was an unresolved challenge between the need to improve access to Headstone Manor, and the need to retain the sports pitches.

The workshops had focused on the four topics which had generated the most interest during the first stage of consultation, namely core ingredients, placemaking, perspectives and sustainability. From these four topics, a number of key themes had emerged, including the following:

- Core ingredients: there was a need for parking, community facilities, and there should be a landmark feature.

- Placemaking: this was a place that should link into all of the areas around it; it was important to include the young and the very old; and there was a need for a mix of housing types and tenures.
- Perspectives: any development should be no higher than current buildings, there should be communal space, the edge of the development should be lower density, and there was no conclusion regarding the retention of the Kodak chimney.
- Sustainability: green links were important, as were community management, drainage and water re-use; the development should include open space; and consideration should be given to a train link.

The next stage would be to hold feedback exhibitions in the early part of June. It was noted that Land Securities hoped to be able to share ideas about the masterplan for the site at the next Panel meeting, and to submit an outline planning application later in the year.

Following the presentation, Members commented as follows:

- any proposals should take advantage of the fact that there were already tall buildings on the site, and the opportunity to build tall buildings should not be lost;
- it was noted that there had been no conclusion about the Kodak chimney, and it was suggested that the site should be used for a gasification plant. It was reported, however, that the chimney was still owned and in use by Kodak;
- concern was expressed about particulate matter emitted by the chimney and the impact on the saleability of surrounding properties as a result of health and safety concerns. The Divisional Director of Planning advised that an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required as part of the planning application and would need to address this issue.

Members also questioned whether the development should be mixed use or purely residential, given that there were other mixed use developments in the Borough where the business premises had been vacant for years. Mr Neal stated that such developments did not work if they were isolated but the Kodak site had a critical mass which created its own vitality. The Divisional Director of Planning confirmed that the site had an important economic role and advised that officers were in dialogue with Land Securities on how to ensure it fulfilled this. He stated that the development would have to be properly market-tested at inception, and properly marketed and promoted.

It was noted that approximately 10 to 12% of office space in Harrow was vacant, and this was because the Borough did not have the right mix of office provision, such as large office spaces for corporate headquarters, or the type of offices required by start-up businesses. A Member requested regular updates on the amount of vacant office space in the Borough. It was advised

that it was not possible to produce detailed data although a watching brief was maintained on strategically important areas, and officers undertook to produce an initial report on this for the Panel.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and Members' comments thereon be noted.

Reason for Decision: To keep Members informed of the results of the consultation.

40. Lyon House and Equitable House

In accordance with the Protocol on Meetings with the Major Developments Panel agreed by the Panel at its meeting on 29 September 2010, Members received a pre-application presentation from Martin Sandys and John Smyth of Lockglide Ltd on the proposals for the development of the Lyon House and Equitable House site. Lockglide Ltd were project managers for the development of the site, which was owned by Wichford PLC. Also contributing to the presentation were Rawdon Sherwood of MOSS Architects, John Dyke of planning consultants Savills, and Oliver Boundy of the Metropolitan Housing Partnership.

The Panel were given a powerpoint presentation which provided information on Wichford PLC, the history of the site, its context within the town centre, and the new vision for the site. The proposals were for a new development with a mix of uses, including housing, offices, and A3 and D1 (for example healthcare) use. It was proposed to have a series of individual buildings, rather than one big block, and to landscape the intervals between the buildings to provide public access; the public would be able to walk through the development to and from the town centre and there would be pedestrian priority within a landscaped central courtyard.

The developers indicated that they wanted to knit the site back into the commercial part of the area. There was also a level change of around 15ft on the site which would allow the developers to incorporate an underground car park. The taller elements of the development would be at the northern end towards Debenhams. It was currently anticipated that the development would provide 260 new homes including affordable housing in partnership with the Metropolitan Housing Partnership (low cost home ownership and affordable rent), and approximately 3,800 sq m of office space.

A Member commented that she liked the scheme, especially the underground parking, but was concerned about criminals going through the alleyways between the individual buildings, given the problems with anti-social behaviour in the town centre. Mr Smyth pointed out that, due to the mixed use nature of the development, the alleyways would be overlooked both in the daytime and in the evenings, but suggested that the alleyways could be gated at night. The developers wanted to make part of the site a destination, such as a restaurant, but were open to suggestions. A Member suggested that the development include an art gallery.

Another Member suggested that the developers should consider Gayton Road and the car park, and the possibility of a combined development, as whatever was developed on that site would need to be in sympathy with the Lyon House and Equitable House development. He queried the timescale for the production of the site specific masterplan for the Gayton Road site and requested that the masterplan for that site be prioritised. The Divisional Director of Planning reported that the masterplan would be coming forward at the end of the year, but that the production of the masterplan was a statutory process and it was not possible to advance a separate masterplan without stopping the work currently on-going, as set out in the adopted Local Development Scheme, and consulting on a revised process. The proposals were likely to be submitted before the masterplan process was completed, so the issue for the Planning Committee to consider would be whether the proposals were premature in the context of the emerging masterplan document.

Mr Dyke stated that it was proposed to submit a full planning application in late June or early July, and sought Members' views on this timescale. Members stressed the importance of engaging with local people on the proposals, and a Ward Member undertook to put the developers in touch with local residents' associations. The need for the developers to get in contact with the police in relation to the proposed alleyways was also highlighted.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman thanked the developers for their attendance. The developers offered to come and provide a further update to the Panel's next meeting, and this was welcomed.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and the Panel's comments thereon be noted.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that Members have an understanding of an important strategic proposal.

41. Bradstowe House

The Panel received a report of the Divisional Director of Planning which provided an update on the development at Bradstowe House, a partially completed development in Harrow town centre.

It was noted that the developer was in default of the S106 contributions and the amount owed was queried. It was advised that the initial lump sum of £1,032,660 only had been paid, and that approximately £2m was owing. This did not result in an immediate risk to any programme, but Members were concerned nonetheless that the unrecovered sum would not be available to support the delivery of affordable housing in the Borough. A Member was also concerned that the developer may submit revised plans for the building which, if approved, would impact on the level of S106 contributions. The Divisional Director of Planning stated that it was in the Council's interest to get the development moving forward, but that any re-structuring of the S106 agreement would be a decision for the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: To enable members of the Panel to be updated on the status of the site.

42. Major Sites Schedule

The Panel considered a report of the Corporate Director of Place Shaping, which provided an update on progress in relation to strategic sites.

At the meeting, the Divisional Director of Planning reported that a planning application had now been received in relation to Tesco, Station Road.

RESOLVED: That the content of the schedule of strategic sites be noted.

Reason for Decision: To enable members of the Panel to be updated on the status of the strategic sites within the Borough.

43. Future Topics and Presentations

The Divisional Director of Planning reported that the following items which had been due to be received at this meeting would now be on the agenda for the next meeting:

- Progress on the Discussions with Dandara in relation to a Specific Proposal
- Work with Open City – a Presentation from Young People

These items had been deferred from this meeting as the Dandara proposals were still under development, and the young people were going through the election of a new Youth Parliament.

Members noted that the developers of the Lyon House and Equitable House site would be coming back to the next meeting, and that the Panel could also receive a further update on the Kodak site. It was suggested that there be an item on transport, and officers agreed to speak to the Harrow Public Transport Users Association and consultants Alan Baxters Associates. A Member requested a further update on Bradstowe House, and the Divisional Director of Planning undertook to incorporate this into the schedule of strategic sites. The meeting would also receive a Stage 2 Area Action Plan update.

RESOLVED: That the list of items for the next meeting of the Panel be noted.

Reason for Decision: To keep Members informed of future items for discussion.

44. Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting of the Panel will be held on Thursday 26 May 2011.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.25 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chairman