

Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium, Plough Lane

in the London Borough of Merton

planning application no. 14/P4361

Strategic planning application – addendum to update report

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008.

The proposal

The proposals comprise the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of a 20,000 seat football stadium (initially 11,000 seat) with hospitality and coach parking, pedestrian streets, 1,273 sq.m. retail unit, 1,730 sq.m. squash and fitness club, 602 residential units with basement parking, refuse storage, 297 car parking spaces, cycle parking, and associated landscaping/open space and servicing.

The applicant

The applicant is **Galliard Homes** and the architect is **Sheppard Robson**.

Issues

1. There are no material changes in circumstances relating to the application or planning policy. The change in circumstance is that the Mayor has changed.
2. Update on consultation responses received.
3. Consideration of whether the Mayor either:
 - a) Maintains jurisdiction over the application and holds a Representation Hearing to decide it;
 - b) Cancels the direction made by the previous Mayor and hands back authority to Merton Council to determine the application.

The Council's decision

Merton Council has resolved to grant permission.

Recommendation

That the Mayor considers this report and decides whether to reverse the previous Mayor's direction that he was to become the local planning authority.

Background

1 As set out in the GLA's Stage 2 report and update report, the application was referred to the previous Mayor at Stage 1 on 19 December 2014, and on 4 February 2015 the previous Mayor considered planning report D&P/3130b/01 (attached). Merton Council was advised that while the principle of development was in general accordance with strategic and local planning policy, the application did not fully comply with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 111 of the report; but that the possible remedies set out in that paragraph could help address these deficiencies.

2 On 10 December 2015, following amendments to the scheme, Merton Council decided that it was minded to grant planning permission for the revised application. On 8 March 2016 it advised the Mayor of this decision. Officers advised the previous Mayor that there were no sound strategic planning reasons to take over the application (paragraphs 78 to 84). Having considered planning report ref: D&P/3130b/02, the previous Mayor decided on 22 March 2016 to issue a direction under Article 7 of the Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 that he was to act as the Local Planning Authority for the purposes of determining the application. However the application was not determined within that Mayoralty and the case remains outstanding.

3 As set out in the update report dated 18 July 2016 and published on 26 July 2016 (ref: D&P/3130b/03), following legal advice it is considered that the Mayor has power to withdraw a direction made under article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 ('Order') that he is to act as the local planning authority. The Mayor has implied power to reverse such a direction made pursuant to article 7 of the Order. In the case of R (Trustees of the Friends of the Lake District) v Secretary of State for the Environment [2002] P&CR23 it was held in relation to section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that it must be implicit in that section that the Secretary of State can withdraw or revoke a call in direction made by him under that section. It is considered that the Mayor has an equivalent implied power which can be exercised if there are sound planning reasons to do so.

4 Within the legal context above, the options available to the Mayor are:

- i. Maintain jurisdiction over the application as the "local planning authority" and hold a Representation Hearing at which the Mayor would determine the application; or,
- ii. Use the implied power to cancel the previous Mayor's direction to call in the application and thus returning jurisdiction back to the council.

5 This report updates the Mayor on whether to progress to a Representation Hearing, or, given his implied powers to cancel the previous Mayor's direction, return jurisdiction to Merton Council to determine the application. It includes a summary of the representations received since the update report was published, to inform the Mayor's decision.

6 This report should be read in conjunction with the GLA's Stage 1 and Stage 2 report ref: D&P/3130b/01 and D&P/3130b/02 which contains the site description, an overview of the proposals, a summary of representations received up to 22 March 2016 and an assessment of the proposals against strategic planning policies. It should also be read in conjunction with the update report dated 18 July 2016 (ref: D&P/3130b/03) which sets out the options for the new Mayor in taking the case forward, outlines the consultation procedure and summarises the direct representations received between 22 March 2016 and 18 July 2016.

Consultation

7 The GLA notified key stakeholders by letter and email on 26 July 2016 that the update report ref: D&P/3130b/03 had been published, and invited further representations within 14 days. The consultation period ended on 10 August 2016 and the representations received have been considered and are outlined below.

8 A total of 8,460 representations were received between 26 July and 10 August 2016. 7,866 responses expressed support for the Mayor returning jurisdiction over the application to Merton Council, and 594 responses expressed opposition to the Mayor reversing the previous Mayor's decision and/or expressed opposition to the current planning proposals.

9 Of the representations in support, 7,415 used a standard text stating:

"I am of the opinion that the previous Mayor's decision to assume control over the Plough Lane planning application from Merton Council was mistaken. I support the proposal to return the application to Merton Council for a final decision."

10 451 other representations in support were also received, with the following matters raised in support of the Mayor returning the application to Merton Council:

- Merton approved the case unanimously and after a thorough and fair public consultation and scrutiny. Issues raised during two rounds of public consultation have been adequately dealt with
- Planning officers at Merton, Wandsworth and GLA all recommended approval. Officers at Environment Agency and TfL raised no objection
- Previous Mayor's decision was against the advice of officers and no valid reason given for calling in application; can't understand why he made this decision.
- A decision to hand the case back to Merton would be appropriate as it would represent local democracy
- Greyhound racing is cruel, should be banned and has no place as entertainment (approximately 75 respondents raised the issue of animal cruelty)
- AFC Wimbledon is a family club, formed and owned by fans. The club does a huge amount of work in the community
- Club will benefit local community and economy.
- AFC Wimbledon means so much to so many people and needs to come home
- Delays in planning process are harming club
- Delay and uncertainty caused by the previous Mayor's decision to call in the application has had a disastrous impact on Christopher's Squash and Fitness Club as many members left anticipating closure. Club has now been left in limbo.
- Greyhound stadium is eyesore and brings down area. Proposals will bring about much needed regeneration
- Area needs more housing
- Objectors are simply opposed to football and are putting forward myths and falsehoods to oppose project
- Traffic impacts will not be as serious as people suggest – fans will use public transport. Idea that there should be more parking within the development is insane and illogical. London has several clubs in built up areas, e.g. Arsenal which clears 60,000 fans from area in 30 minutes.
- Public consultation on application revealed overwhelming public support for proposals

11 Of the representations received in opposition to the proposals and the Mayor returning the application to Merton, 207 respondents used a standard text which raised the following issues:

- Asks Mayor to consider all elements of current planning application and continue to act as the planning authority
- Council have agreed to sporting diversification on the site and this proposal would lead to loss of two sports
- There has been no consultation with stock car racing tenant
- Abandoning oval racing and greyhound racing will lead to loss of jobs, closure of supporting industries and leisure facility
- 9% affordable housing is far short of policy target
- River Wandle has flooded three times in last 60 years and Plough Lane has flooded three times in recent months, including inside stadium
- Regeneration must be in line with Sport England Policy and include the two existing sports

12 387 other responses have been received, raising the following issues in opposition to the proposals:

Issues with Merton's handling of the case

- Merton Council's decision was pre-determined. Merton is not neutral in this case. The Leader is AFC Wimbledon supporter and officers acted as advocates for the football club. It would be perverse to let Merton determine case when it clearly has a political interest
- Objectors and opposition councillors were intimidated by supporters
- Cumulative impacts with other approved developments have not been properly considered, e.g. Springfield site and new Lidl store
- Residents' concerns were ignored by Merton
- Paschal Taggart's alternative plans have not been given due attention

Objections to planning application proposals

- A venue for stock car and speedway racing should be safeguarded
- Greyhound racing is one of last sources of low cost family entertainment and this is last venue in London
- Don't need football
- Proposals will put unsustainable strain on local infrastructure
- Proposals will lead to gridlock on already strained roads and public transport. Access for emergency vehicles will be compromised
- Parking proposed is inadequate
- Existing site provides parking for St George's hospital which would be displaced
- Crossrail 2 needs to be finalised before this development can be considered
- Affordable housing offer is meagre; new Mayor was elected to get 50%. It is only unviable to provide 50% because of the football stadium which isn't needed or wanted.
- There have been two recent flooding events on the site and proposals will make this worse. The Environment Agency never gave reasons for its decision to downgrade the flood zone classification
- Proposals will lead to increased air pollution and this has not been properly considered
- Proposals will result in loss of daylight and privacy to neighbouring properties
- Stadium and proposals are uninspired design
- 20,000 seats won't be enough and there will be pressure to expand further

- Crowd dispersal needs further consideration
- Proposals breach London Plan Policy 4.6 (support for and enhancement of arts, culture, sports and entertainment)
- Disregarded/unanswered questions about impact on residents, particularly in Wandsworth.
- Impact on Garrett Business Park – insufficient consideration of local traffic flow and parking, especially down narrow Riverside Road and Summerstown; security concerns
- Impact on local businesses of Plough lane closure on match days, including new Lidl store
- Owners of greyhound stadiums across country are deliberately running them down in order to get planning permission for more profitable uses
- Anti-social behaviour of football fans will negatively impact on residents
- This is not the right place for a stadium and it would be better located in Kingston.

Process

- Wandsworth borough is equally affected and they should have their chance to put their case forward
- GLA responses to letters received prior to the update report being published said that a public hearing would be held
- This consultation has been held in the holiday period when many people are away; it should be extended until September
- There is no basis for handing back the application. This is exactly the sort of case (where there is dispute in the community about the proposals and the proposals impact on more than one borough) which should be decided by the Mayor.
- Mayor's decision would allow objective and neutral assessment.

Other key correspondence

13 Responses were also received from the following elected representatives, local community associations and local businesses:

Siobhain McDonagh MP (Labour MP for Mitcham and Morden)

Writes to ask the Mayor to hand the application back to Merton Council. Boris Johnson's decision to call the application in was not justified and against the advice of his officials. Wimbledon football club's departure to Selhurst Park was a sad loss for the borough. AFC Wimbledon have established themselves as a truly community based club dedicated to developing young people. Their return to the borough would boost the local economy. A new ground in the borough would end more than 20 years in exile.

Dan Watkins (Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Tooting)

Wandsworth residents remain very concerned that the application does not provide funding to support the additional local services needed to accommodate the development. The Mayor does need to decide the application so that Wandsworth residents get a direct say into this strategic development, alongside the views of Merton residents.

Councillor Stephen Alambritis (Leader, Merton Council)

Writes in support of the application. It would return AFC Wimbledon to its home borough and provide much needed new homes and employment opportunities and would regenerate street scene, townscape and public transport links. Merton Council officers and Merton's Planning Applications Committee have carefully assessed the suitability of the site for more than four years, including more than nine months of public consultation. The site has been subject to two

major examinations in public – first at the February 2014 Local Plan site allocations, approved by the Planning Inspectorate, and in December 2015 at Merton’s planning committee. Merton officers, Wandsworth officers, GLA officers, TfL and the Environment Agency have all analysed the application and raised no objection. Wandsworth Council have been closely involved at every stage and will receive more than £1.5 million to improve infrastructure in the borough. Scheme represents a substantial, once in a generation investment into the area.

Ged Curran (Chief Executive, Merton Council)

Writes in support of the application and the Mayor returning jurisdiction to Merton. After nearly four years of assessing the site’s suitability, nine months of public consultation, and support from professional officers, Merton’s Planning Applications Committee unanimously decided to approve the planning application and GLA officers recommended that this decision was allowed to stand. The application would deliver one of the ambitions in Merton Council’s Core Strategy: to return AFC Wimbledon to its home borough. The venue, 602 homes and jobs would create a vibrant new neighbourhood. Merton has a strong track record in delivering affordable homes, and exceeded the borough’s 40% target last year. The development would deliver 60 much needed affordable homes. The Council has worked closely with independent viability experts to ensure that this site delivered the maximum amount of affordable homes whilst recognising that enabling sporting intensification and associated improvements impacts on viability. A late-stage review of viability is included as part of the legal agreement.

Councillor Sarah McDermott (Chair of Planning Committee, Wandsworth Council)

Notes that previous Mayor called in the application stating that there were sound planning reasons for doing so, and that there are no material changes in circumstances since then. Although the decision to call in was made against officer recommendation, this does not appear to be a justification for reversing the decision. It continues to be Wandsworth Council’s opinion that a number of issues, particularly the impact of the development on public transport infrastructure are unresolved. Although the commitment to funding improvements to local highways is welcomed the impact of increased traffic is largely unchanged – justifiably a very serious concern of local residents. Despite no objection being received from Network Rail and South West Trains regarding capacity issues on the local infrastructure, this is surprising given the day to day experience of people using local rail services. Remains of view that this matter requires an additional degree of scrutiny and assessment by an impartial organisation, and therefore requests that Mayor maintains jurisdiction.

Merton Councillors Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Nick Draper, Martin Whelton, Stan Anderson, Fidelis Gadzama, Pauline Cowper and Dennis Pearce

Write in support of the application and bringing AFC Wimbledon back to the borough.

Merton Councillors Oonagh Moulton, Janice Howard and Linda Taylor

Write to request that Mayor retains jurisdiction over the application. Whilst they have consistently supported return of AFC Wimbledon to the borough, there are reservations about the scale of the development and the failure of Merton Council to provide the necessary infrastructure investment to support it. There is an inadequate amount of affordable housing in the scheme, and remain concerns about local infrastructure and flooding.

Wimbledon Park Residents' Association

The WRPA raise objections to the application and the proposal to allow Merton to determine the application. The group argues that there is evidence of pre-determination from Merton from the beginning of the process. It is their view that Merton has ignored the impact on the road and public transport network and this needs to be reconsidered independently. The retail study submitted with the application did not consider the cumulative impact of the Lidl store, the Cooperative store and the Sainsbury's which are now due to open near the site and the group anticipates that the site would now fail the sequential test for retail floor space. The applicants and Council have failed to acknowledge the prospect of Crossrail 2 in the context of the application. A proper assessment of flood risk needs to take place. The group notes that the Mayor has not met with residents and considers that consultation has not been carried out in a balanced way. There is no justification for there being less than 10% affordable housing and notes the Mayor's commitment to achieving 50% affordable housing in schemes. The increased risk of terrorism now needs to be taken into account in this scheme.

Another response from the WPRA has pointed out that a letter in support of the application purporting to be from the WPRA referred to in Merton and GLA's reports was not from this group (GLA officers note this and also that Merton Council's addendum committee report acknowledged this error).

Wimbledon Society

The Wimbledon Society considers that authority for determining the application should rest with the Mayor. The Society is not opposed to the use of the site as a football stadium. However, they consider that only an 11,000 seat stadium should be granted to enable impact to be fully assessed. A plan for improving public transport should be in place before permission is granted. The affordable housing should be increased, flood risk should be further considered and the scale and height of the housing blocks should be reviewed.

Wimbledon E Hillside Residents' Association (WEHRA)

Writes in objection to the application and to the Mayor potentially handing it back to Merton. A comprehensive masterplan for the area is required before regeneration is undertaken, which would take account of the flood plain, the light industrial corridor and Crossrail 2. Area requires more affordable housing and sustainable transport.

Walsingham Planning, on behalf of Lidl UK GmbH

Writes to object to the application on the basis that the Transport Assessment and Retail Impact Assessment are now outdated and fail to account for present circumstances, namely the new 1,631 sq.m. Lidl store opposite the site. The new store could potentially involve further changes to the pattern of vehicle movements (including HGV movements) on local roads, and also an increase in pedestrian movements which needs to be further assessed. Lidl object to the proposals to close a section of Plough Lane for 30 minute periods on match days (approximately 23 temporary closures per football season) due to the impact this would have on their business. The submitted retail impact assessment does not consider the Lidl store and the impact that this will have on the retail provision in the local area. The cumulative impact of the Lidl store and the proposed retail unit within the stadium development may affect the vitality and viability of existing centres and the up-to-date evidence needs to be assessed.

Garratt Business Park Management Ltd

Writes with serious concern about additional traffic congestion in Plough Lane, Summerstown and Garratt Lane, and the impact this would have on the business operations of the industrial estate, as well as security concerns.

Paschal Taggart

Writes to object to the current application and to make the Mayor aware of his alternative plans for redevelopment of the greyhound stadium with 264 affordable homes (50%). Asserts that the scheme to provide a football stadium is not financially viable as evidenced by the applicant's need to reduce affordable housing from 50% to 9.6%, and therefore the scheme should be rejected as inappropriate. Approval of the application would lead to unacceptable development on an active floodplain. Approval of the application would lead to loss of greyhound racing, which is part of London's diverse cultural heritage. The local infrastructure cannot contend with 20,000 football supporters arriving at the site. His alternative proposal is for 3,000 seat greyhound stadium, as well as a 555-space multi-storey car park used for resident parking and parking for St George's Hospital. Merton failed to acknowledge impact of proposals on Lidl store. Owners of site have history of buying greyhound tracks and seeking to redevelop them.

Peter Gray, on behalf of the Stock Car Racing Community

Draws the Mayor's attention to an online petition against the demolition of the stadium and the loss of the Stock Car racing venue. (This petition was referred to in the GLA's Stage 2 report and at that time had 11,500 signatures; the petition now has 12,178 signatures).

Greyhound Board of Great Britain

Believes that the Mayor should determine the application. Proposed development will have an impact on the neighbouring borough of Wandsworth. This is the last greyhound stadium in London and greyhound racing is part of Britain's sporting and cultural heritage. Greyhound racing offers affordable family entertainment and helps to maintain sporting diversity. The reasons for calling in the application are still valid. Merton Council has political reasons for seeking the return of football to the borough.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

Reiterates support for the closure of the stadium due to the cruelty of greyhound racing.

Response to representations received

Process

14 With regard to Merton Council's handling of the case, the GLA accepted the referral from Merton and is satisfied that the Council has followed the correct processes in reaching a recommendation on the proposals. Merton's committee report contains a comprehensive assessment of the proposals against planning policy and relevant material considerations including the public representations received. The application was debated in public by Merton Council's planning committee and it was unanimously resolved by members to approve planning permission.

15 Regarding the alternative plans by Pascal Taggart, officers understand that a pre-planning request has been registered with Merton Council but a meeting has not yet been held, and no pre-application requests have been formally submitted to the GLA. No planning application has been made for the alternative proposals. In any case, even if an alternative scheme had been submitted and granted planning permission, this could not influence the outcome of the current case, as each application must be considered on its own merits and planning authorities could not decline to determine one case in favour of another.

16 In terms of the current process, it is acknowledged that the proposals also impact on the adjoining borough but as noted in the Stage 2 report this is not one of the policy tests for the Mayor to take over a planning application in this case. Wandsworth Council has had the opportunity to put its case forward in several rounds of consultation and its officers have been actively involved in the drafting of the S106 agreement, which in GLA officers' view contains satisfactory measures to mitigate against impacts on this borough.

17 The GLA has consulted on the option of the Mayor returning the application to Merton Council instead of continuing to act as the local planning authority and it is considered that 14 days is an appropriate time to enable those wishing to make further representations on this question to do so. All representations received to Merton Council's original consultations were outlined in Merton's committee report and in the GLA's Stage 2 report.

Land use

18 Issues regarding the use of the site for football/squash as opposed to greyhound and stockcar racing have been covered extensively in Merton's committee report and in the GLA's Stage 1 and 2 reports (including an assessment against London Plan Policy 4.6). To reiterate, there is no planning policy basis for the retention of the existing uses as opposed to other sporting uses and the proposals comply with the London Plan and other relevant local, regional and national policy.

Traffic and transport

19 The impact of the proposals on local roads and public transport have been fully considered by Merton Council and assessed in its committee report and found to be acceptable, having regard to input from relevant statutory bodies, transport operators and the local highway authority. No capacity issues on public transport have been identified, either in terms of match day traffic or the day-to-day needs of the new homes.

20 The impact of the proposals on the strategic highway network and on public transport has also been considered by TfL, which has worked closely with the council and the developer to ensure that the impacts of the stadium and residential development can be mitigated. TfL raise no objections to the proposals. With regard to Crossrail 2, the Wimbledon Stadium planning application and transport assessment were submitted in 2014 and as a result did not include an assessment of Crossrail 2 because work on the scheme has only recently begun. Importantly it is not yet a committed scheme as it requires approval through the parliamentary Hybrid Bill process which is planned to commence in 2019. As part of this process TfL will be undertaking a more detailed assessment of how the railway network will impact upon the surrounding area. Where it is appropriate to do so, the Crossrail 2 project will take into account the effects of the operational phases of the Wimbledon Stadium application. As such it is not considered necessary or appropriate to delay the consideration of the current application.

Flood Risk

21 In terms of flood risk, as explained in Merton's committee report and the GLA's Stage 2 report, the applicant's designs are considered to satisfactorily address the risk of flooding at the site, and the Environment Agency has confirmed that there are no flood risk objections to the proposals. There is no evidence to suggest that the development, designed as suggested to account for the flood risk, would worsen flooding.

Affordable housing

22 With regard to the affordable housing, as explained in Merton's committee report and the GLA's Stage 2 report, it has been robustly demonstrated that the affordable housing is the maximum reasonable amount that can be achieved within the development and this has been verified by independent viability experts. There is a review mechanism within the S106 agreement which would capture uplift in affordable housing should the viability increase during the development period.

Retail

23 The representations from Lidl UK and other representations raising the issue of the applicant's retail impact assessment and transport assessment are noted. It is acknowledged by the GLA that the applicant's documents did not take account of the Lidl store as they were submitted prior to permission being granted for a variation of condition on the former Curry's store to allow food retail (permission granted in November 2015). However, the cumulative impact of the food stores has been assessed, as part of Lidl's own planning application. The retail impact assessment and transport assessment submitted by Lidl to support their application took full account of the Stadium site in their Retail Assessment and their Transport Assessment, both of which concluded that there would be no significant harm to the highways network or to the viability or vitality of existing town centres. Considering that the Stadium transport assessment was used to inform the reports for Lidl's application it is assumed that Lidl was aware of the proposals to close a section of Plough Lane on match days for 30 minutes, but no representations to Merton Council appear to have been made by Lidl on the Stadium application. However GLA officers note that access to the Lidl store is possible via Waterside Way, and vehicle and pedestrian access to the store would not be cut off during the temporary closure of a section of Plough Lane. It is therefore considered, in respect of these issues, that the cumulative impact of consented schemes has been satisfactorily assessed and found to be acceptable, and that these need not be assessed again.

Other local impacts

24 The impact of the proposals on local infrastructure, air quality, local businesses and the residential amenity of local residents have been fully considered by Merton Council and assessed in its committee report and found to be acceptable. The section 106 agreement, in GLA officers' view, contains satisfactory measures and contributions to improve local infrastructure and mitigate against the impact of the development.

Summary

25 In summary, the further representations received have been fully and comprehensively analysed, but it is not considered that new material issues have been raised that have not previously been considered as part of Merton Council's comprehensive assessment of the application, and the assessment of GLA officers in the earlier Stage 1 and 2 reports.

Update since the previous Mayor called in the application

26 Since the previous Mayor took over the application 22 March 2016 the change in circumstances has been the election of the current Mayor. All other issues, including the details of the proposal, the circumstances of the site and relevant planning policy, have not changed materially. The responses to further representations received since 22 March 2016 are outlined in the update report ref: D&P/3130b/03 and in this report. As explained above, it is not considered that the further representations raise new strategic issues that have not been addressed in Merton Council's committee report, or within the GLA's Stage 2 report (ref: D&P/3130b/02) and/or within the previous Mayors initial representations to the Council (ref: D&P/3130b/01).

Legal considerations

27 Under Article 7 of the Order the Mayor could continue to act as the local planning authority for this application provided the policy tests set out in that Article are met. In the specific circumstances of this application, these are:

- (a) the development or any of the issues raised by the development to which the application relates is of such a nature or scale that it would have a significant impact on the implementation of the spatial development strategy;*
- (b) there are sound planning reasons for issuing a direction.*

28 As set out in paragraph 3, GLA officers consider that the Mayor has implied power to withdraw a direction made under Article 7 of the Order that he is to act as the local planning authority and that power can be exercised if there are sound planning reasons to do so.

29 In considering whether there are sound planning reasons, it should be noted that, even where the relevant tests in Article 7(1) are met, the power to give a direction under Article 7 is discretionary. Further, both tests involve questions of planning judgment on which different decision makers could reasonably and lawfully come to a different conclusion.

30 There is no precedent from past practice as the only previous change in Mayoral administration occurred before these positive planning powers were introduced. It is envisaged that ordinarily there would be good reasons for the new Mayor to determine a PSI application called-in by his/her predecessor and that the implied power to "hand back" a PSI called-in application to the originating local planning authority, should only be used sparingly as an exceptional course of action. A feature of the present case which stands out is that the decision of the past Mayor was made against the advice of officers who had recommended that there were not strategically sound planning reasons to intervene.

31 As set out in paragraphs 78-84 of the GLA's Stage 2 report (ref: D&P/3130b/02), Merton Council at its planning committee unanimously resolved to grant permission with conditions and a planning obligation which satisfactorily address the strategic planning issues. The application is considered to be in conformity with the London Plan. As the circumstances of the proposal have not changed, officers still consider that there are no sound reasons to intervene in the determination of the application.

Conclusion

32 As set out in the update report ref: D&P/3130b/03, the Mayor has two options in moving forward with the case: either to maintain jurisdiction over the application, or to cancel the

previous Mayor's direction and return the application to Merton Council to determine. Having regard to the details of the application, the matters set out in Merton Council's committee report, its draft decision notice and the draft heads of terms, the matters raised in representations to the Council and to the Mayor, and the fact that there have been no material change in circumstances since the previous Mayor's decision, officers still consider that the scheme is acceptable in strategic terms. Officers have therefore concluded that there are no sound planning reasons to maintain jurisdiction over the application, and that the Mayor may thus reverse the previous direction that he was to act as the local planning authority.

for further information, contact GLA Planning Unit (Development & Projects Team):

Stewart Murray, Assistant Director – Planning

020 7983 4271 email stewart.murray@london.gov.uk

Colin Wilson, Senior Manager – Development & Projects

020 7983 4783 email colin.wilson@london.gov.uk

Katherine Wood, Case Officer

020 7983 5743 email katherine.wood@london.gov.uk
