



City of Westminster

City Plan Sub-Committee Report

Date:	21 st July 2016
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Draft Upper Vauxhall Bridge Road site development opportunity framework (DOF)
Report of:	Director of Policy, Performance and Communications
Cabinet Member Portfolio:	Built Environment
Wards Affected:	All
City for All	The draft DOF supports the delivery of all three City For All priorities by creating opportunities for everybody to be active and healthy through improvements to the sports centre (City of Choice), supporting the building of more affordable homes and more employment opportunities (City of Aspiration) and promoting the development of a high quality urban quarter (City of Heritage).
Key Decision:	No
Financial Summary:	Met by existing budgets
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Queen Mother Sports Centre building and facilities are now 35 years old and in need of modernisation. It is therefore in need of redevelopment to ensure it is able to continue operating and provide a leisure offer meeting modern standards. The redevelopment of the site and building provides an opportunity to improve the facilities and importantly provide a leisure offer that meets modern standards. The wider area around the sports centre would also benefit from regeneration to create an urban quarter more in keeping with the surroundings, that would better meet the needs of local residents and those working in or visiting the Victoria area. To this end the Council considers that a comprehensive approach to development of both the existing centre and its environs is required to promote the proper planning of the area, deliver sustainable development and to complement the strategic importance of the wider Victoria area. This approach will maximise benefit to the area and its residents and enable delivery of a higher quality built environment and public realm in an area where these are currently of comparatively low value.
- 1.2 A 'Development Opportunity Framework' (DOF) has been drafted to set out the character and function of the area and the background to the site. This document is not a blueprint or masterplan; rather it sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the site and sets principles that any redevelopment will be expected to embody. Its purpose is ultimately to guide development proposals as they are drawn up for sites within the DOF boundary. Once formally adopted as a supplementary planning document the DOF would be a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.3 It is important to emphasise for the purpose of the discussions at the City Plan Sub-Committee that the DOF is a guide for *any* developer with an interest in the site and is intended to provide transparency for stakeholders about the council's expectations for any development. It does not form part of any planning application or proposal by the Council itself for the site.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That members review the summary of the DOF below with a view to giving feedback on the priorities, vision and policy requirements identified for development of the site and agree the approach to public consultation.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The City of Westminster owns the Queen Mother Sports Centre (QMSC) which is situated a few hundred metres from Victoria Station and transport interchange. It is the Council's most popular sports centre, serving the local community and many commuters who work in the Victoria area. It is located just outside the formal boundary of the Victoria Opportunity Area.
- 3.2 While the entrance to the sports facility is located on Vauxhall Bridge Road, the main building is largely located within the centre of an island block surrounded by Wilton Road, Gillingham Row, Longmoore Street, Upper Tachbrook Street and Vauxhall Bridge Road.



3.3 The existing sports centre building is reaching the end of its useful life span and many of the facilities are now out of date. The low quality of the other buildings within the site boundary and the unattractive public realm in which they are set means that there is an opportunity to create a destination people will want to visit rather than pass by. Whole-site development would also provide opportunities to address the lack of permeability through the site, which disadvantages the shopping centre on Wilton Road from drawing in consumers from Vauxhall Bridge Road; and to provide open space in an area of deficiency.

3.4 The requirement for alternative facilities to be sought prior to the existing sports centre being closed for redevelopment is highlighted in the DOF as being of utmost importance and developers must address this in their proposals. This message will be communicated in any publicity material issued to support consultation on the DOF.

4.0 Policy context

4.1 Under planning law, the role of an SPD of this kind is intended to help guide successful development. In keeping with legislation and national policy it cannot and does not change or add new policy but explains and adds further detail to adopted planning policies to help potential developers understand the council's policies and requirements and help them make successful applications. The DOF references the London Plan (2015), Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies (2013) and Unitary Development Plan (2007) albeit with a recognition that the latter document is old in policy terms now and will soon be superseded by emerging development management policies.

4.2 Development of the site which follows the guidance in the DOF will contribute to the following strategic objectives of Westminster's City Plan:

- improved quality of life and health and well-being;
- sustainable growth;
- creation of attractive places;
- increased employment opportunities; and
- an increased supply of good quality housing, including the provision of affordable homes.

- 4.3 The site falls within the Pimlico section of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), is directly adjacent to the Victoria Opportunity Area (VOA), is partially within a CAZ shopping frontage, and partially within the Pimlico Conservation Area. It is also in an area identified as being of public open space and wildlife deficiency. The site contains retail, hotel, residential and social and community uses protected by planning policy.
- 4.4 Given the site's location within the Central Activities Zone and directly adjacent to the Victoria Opportunity Area, policies relating to mixed use and increasing employment and housing opportunities are highly relevant. The DOF explains that the sports and leisure use is protected by planning policy, but redevelopment to provide improved facilities will be welcomed. The DOF also sets out other policy requirements relating to transport, sustainability, open space and design and heritage – as summarised in the table on pages 5-6 below.
- 4.5 Once adopted the DOF will have a formal status in the planning system as a supplementary planning document. It is being prepared through the process set out in the relevant regulations.¹

5.0 Priorities for the site

- 5.1 The Council's vision for this site is for a comprehensive redevelopment to maximise delivery of social and community benefits (including new and improved sports and leisure facilities and open space) for a growing resident and working population; to create a new, high quality urban quarter that improves the experience of all who live, work and visit the area; to provide an attractive new space transforming the site into a destination in its own right; to expand and improve the commercial offer and deliver new residential units to help meet Westminster's housing needs and support the City's growth, complementing the development of the Victoria Opportunity Area.
- 5.2 Six priorities have been identified for development of the site:
- (i) Social and community benefits for local residents and workers.
 - (ii) Redevelopment of the existing sports centre to provide modern accessible sports and leisure facilities which can cater to the needs of a growing local residential population and local workforce.
 - (iii) Increase housing numbers of mixed tenure to contribute to meeting Westminster's housing needs.
 - (iv) Place-making to create improved pedestrian experience by the creation of public space designed to a high quality which creates coherent legible routes through the site.
 - (v) Provision of a mix of commercial uses designed to a high quality to create a destination people will visit rather than pass through.
 - (vi) Ensure a development that enhances the quality of the area through exemplary design and public realm, both through individual elements and as a whole and embodies high environmental standards.

¹ Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

5.3 To help to deliver these priorities the DOF sets out a table of policy requirements (shown below) for development of the site:

Theme	Requirements from development at this site
Principles of development	A mix of uses.
	A holistic approach to redevelopment of the whole site.
Sports and Leisure centre	Improved, modern, accessible sports and leisure centre.
	Alternative facilities must be found for sports centre users before redevelopment can commence.
Commercial uses	Contribute to Victoria's emerging status as an office destination.
	Create new jobs.
	Offer employment, training and skills opportunities for local people.
	Replacement of existing office floorspace.
	Provision of affordable business space.
Retail	Replacement of existing, and an uplift in, retail floorspace.
	Physical townscape improvements to the shopping centre to enhance the overall shopping experience, viability and vitality of centre.
	Provision of a range of units sizes.
	Existing occupiers of A1/A2/A3/A5 units offered space in the new development.
	Development should not result in a concentration of non-A1 uses and not less than 55% of the frontage length should be in A1 use.
Residential	Increase in residential units at a density appropriate to the site's location and 6B PTAL rating.
	High quality residential units.
	Sustainable residential units in terms of energy and water.
	Units should be fit for purpose during changing life circumstances.
	A third of new units should be family sized (3 or more bedrooms).
	An appropriate amount of amenity space should be provided for residents.
	Development should address play space deficiency.
	35% affordable housing required.
	A mix of intermediate and social tenures in the affordable provision.
	20% of units may be required as starter homes.
Units should meet minimum space standards.	
Public realm	High quality, new attractive and accessible open space creating permeability through the site and a space for people to meet / dwell.
	Improved legibility and way-finding.
	Improvements to safety for pedestrians e.g. effective and appropriate lighting, improved footpath capacity, pedestrian crossings.
Car parking	Provision of unallocated off-street car parking for a proportion of residential units.
	Innovative space-saving ideas for car parking encouraged.
	Car club membership options for residents.
	Space for safe and appropriate servicing and deliveries.
	Disabled parking spaces.
	Electric vehicle car parking/charging points.

Cycle parking	Promotion of sustainable transport methods by making it easier, safer and more attractive to travel by bike.
	Secure cycle parking / innovative cycle storage solutions.
	Provision of a cycle hub including for example maintenance and repair services.
	Changing / showering facilities for cycle parking provided as part of commercial uses.
	Replacement or new docking stations for the London Cycle Hire Scheme.
Sustainability	On-site renewable energy generation, on-site reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 20% and 35% over and above the requirements for carbon reduction as set out in Part L of the Building Regulations.
	Connection to local district heating networks.
	Incorporate sustainable urban drainage into the site.
	Managed rainwater attenuation and grey water recycling facilities.
	Biodiversity improvements through greening the public realm.
	Reduction in air pollution.
	Sustainable control of heating through passive solar design and natural ventilation.
	Sustainable design and construction methods.
On-site recycling and composting waste facilities.	
Design	Sustainable and inclusive design and architecture inside and out.
	Incorporate designing out crime principles.
Heritage	Retention of buildings within the Pimlico Conservation Area which make a positive contribution and retention of key features of merit across the site.
	Modern architecture is encouraged in the right context with respect to local heritage and local distinctiveness.
Higher buildings	Should not have a harmful impact on surroundings.
	Not be visible from the Palace of Westminster or in sensitive townscape views.
	Enhance the London skyline.
	Activate the ground floor.
	Incorporate sustainable architectural design.

5.4 Views are sought from Members on whether the draft document provides an appropriate framework for development of the site, including:

- **whether the identified priorities are considered appropriate for the site?**
- **whether the mix of uses proposed is appropriate?**
- **whether the draft document sets an appropriate design and urban realm approach to development of the site?**

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 Work on developing the supplementary planning document is being met from existing budgets. The consultation on the SPD will be via email and through the post. There will be printing and mailing costs, but these will be met within existing budgets.

6.2 There are therefore no direct financial implications associated with the consultation.

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The procedure for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and Government policy on the role of Supplementary Planning Documents is set out in the NPPF (2012). The first stage – to which this report relates – is to consult with those affected. The council is then required by Regulation 12 and 35 (public participation) to publish the draft SPD and a consultation statement (setting out the persons consulted at the first stage, the issues they raised and how it is proposed to deal with these in the draft SPD) on its website and make them available at its principal office for a period of at least four weeks. Any person may make representations during this period.
- 7.2 Once adopted, the Supplementary Planning Document will form part of the Council's planning policy framework. Although it will not have the same status as the Unitary Development Plan or Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies, it will be a material consideration that can be taken into account in determining planning applications.

8.0 Consultation

- 8.1 An initial consultation will run for at least four weeks in line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Local residents, amenity groups, businesses and other stakeholders will be consulted; a communications plan is being prepared in consultation with ward councillors to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the consultation and of the deadline for submitting comments. Consultation meetings will be arranged as required. It is hoped that this initial consultation can begin before the end of the summer.
- 8.2 Following the initial consultation period the comments received will be analysed and the DOF edited as appropriate. A statement will be prepared (hopefully in early autumn) setting out the persons that were consulted, a summary of the main issues they raised and how those issues have been addressed.
- 8.3 This statement along with the final SPD (incorporating changes as a result of the initial consultation) will be consulted upon for at least the statutory four weeks required by Regulations and in line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
- 8.4 The SPD will then be formally adopted by the Council – it is hoped that this could take place before the end of the year.
- 8.5 **Are members content with the proposed approach to public consultation on the document?**

If you have any questions about this report, or wish to inspect one of the background papers, please contact:

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