



Purfleet Centre Regeneration **Planning Statement**

December 2017





Document Purpose

This document has been prepared in support of an outline application for the regeneration of Purfleet, Thurrock on behalf of Purfleet Centre Regeneration Ltd (PCRL)

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On behalf of:



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a planning application, submitted on behalf of Purfleet Centre Regeneration Limited (PCRL), in respect of a proposed mixed use regeneration scheme at Purfleet. Thurrock Council acts as the local planning authority for the area.
- 1.2 This statement should be read alongside the wide range of other materials that comprise the planning application as it has been submitted to Thurrock Council for their determination. The contents of the planning application are summarised within the covering letter to the application and can be inspected by arrangement with Thurrock Council.
- 1.3 The outline planning application proposes:

'Application for outline planning permission, with all matters reserved for subsequent approval, except for means of access, for mixed-use redevelopment involving the demolition of existing buildings and other structures; site preparation works; and the development of up to 2,850 Dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) comprising a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom units including affordable housing; up to 11,000 sq.m (floorspace) of Business uses (Use Class B1); up to 8,880 sq.m (floorspace) of Shops (Use Class A1); up to 5,220 sq.m (floorspace) of Restaurants and Cafes (Use Class A3); up to 900 sq.m (floorspace) Drinking Establishments (Use Class A4); up to 20,000 sq.m (floorspace) of Hotel accommodation (Use Class C1); up to 18,300 sq.m (floorspace) of Non-residential Institutions uses, comprising a Primary School, Secondary School and Sixth Form, Medical and Community uses (Use Class D1); up to 6,200 sq.m (floorspace) of Assembly and Leisure Uses (Use Class D2); up to 135,000 sq.m (floorspace together with external backlot production space) film and television production space including ancillary workshops, offices and post production facilities and ancillary infrastructure, together with ancillary car park; provision of temporary railway station facilities, up to 1,600 sq.m (floorspace) of upgraded railway station facilities and local waste and power facilities (Sui Generis); all together with associated vehicle parking, open space, landscape and public realm provision, ecological mitigation, highways, pedestrian and vehicular access routes, and other associated engineering, utilities and infrastructure works including but not limited to, rebuilding, repairing, replacing and upgrading of river wall and flood defence wall and associated works of repair and reinstatement of the former Yara Purfleet Terminal Jetty and the former Cory's Wharf Jetty to facilitate the river wall and flood defence works, the provision of four grade separated railway crossings including a new bridge as part of the reprofiling and realignment of London Road'.

- 1.4 The proposed development is considered by the applicants to be broadly consistent with, the proposals for the regeneration of the area set out in the Adopted Thurrock Core Strategy Local Plan (The Core Strategy). Notably, with the scheme involving the delivery of a significant mixed use regeneration scheme, the proposal can be considered to be in direct accordance with the Core Strategy's identification of Purfleet as a Regeneration Area. Underpinning this, the Strategic Policies of the Core Strategy, direct housing and economic growth to the five identified Growth Areas within Thurrock, whilst Policy C5TP5 makes specific reference to the Purfleet Regeneration Area.
- 1.5 The Core Strategy was first adopted in December 2011 and subsequently amended in January 2015. As explained later in this statement, the Core Strategy designates this part of Purfleet as a Key Regeneration and Growth Location Area, including as a suitable location for new housing, education, community and retail facilities, employment uses and other appropriate forms of development.
- 1.6 Outline planning permission has already been granted by Thurrock Council in May 2013 (local authority reference 11/50401/TTGOUT) for a similar comprehensive regeneration scheme at Purfleet. Having regard to this earlier scheme, PCRL were chosen as Thurrock Council's development partner in 2014, tasked under a Development Agreement with preparing and promoting a new masterplan to enable the delivery of this major regeneration project.
- 1.7 Further to the above planning permission, a number of planning applications have recently been made which relate to the Purfleet Centre Regeneration Scheme site:
- New buildings, structure and port infrastructure (16/01698/FUL) – Permitted 04.06.17
 - Construction of 6 form entry secondary school for 1,150 students (17/01171/FUL) – Permitted 10.11.17
 - Redevelopment of Harlow Cottage into 11 flats (17/01008/OUT) – Withdrawn 13.10.17
- 1.8 PCRL as applicants, have been engaged in a substantial pre-application consultation process, which has been on-going since April 2016, in order to shape a new masterplan for the regeneration of Purfleet. This has involved wide ranging and detailed discussions with a range of stakeholders and other interested parties including the local communities, statutory bodies, special interest groups and organisations, and other land owners and developers. The planning application which this statement supports is the result of this process. Further detail about this preparation process can be found within the Statement of Community Involvement, which also accompanies the planning application; the Design and Access Statement; the Environmental Statement and other relevant parts of the submitted application. Hence, the planning application now before Thurrock Council, as a local planning authority for its determination, is the result of a significant amount of preparatory work.
- 1.9 The remainder of this statement describes the Purfleet site and its surroundings in further detail, explains the proposed development and its contents, identifies material considerations to be taken into account in the determination of this planning application, and highlights other key planning issues relevant to the delivery of the proposed development.
- 1.10 As referred to above at paragraph 1.7, Thurrock Council has granted detailed planning permission for the development of a new secondary school within the Purfleet Centre site. It is the intention that this planning permission will be delivered by the Harris Academy. Furthermore, it is intended that this secondary school to be delivered by the Harris Academy will provide secondary school accommodation for the Purfleet Centre Regeneration Scheme. However, as there can currently be no certainty that the secondary school will be delivered by the Harris Academy, it is necessary for the Purfleet Centre application to also propose the development of a secondary school on the same site as the consented school, in the eventuality that this would need to be delivered by PCRL.

2. The Site and its Surroundings

2.1 The application site is to be found on the north bank of the River Thames, upstream of the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge. It comprises a substantial part of the community of Purfleet and occupies an area of approximately 62.85 hectares (155.3 acres) of previously developed land, stretching between the High Speed 1 railway line and Ensign Industrial Estate to the north; the Carpentry warehouse and Esso Fuels terminal to the east and southeast; the north bank of the River Thames to the southwest; and, Caspian Way and the Essex Thameside Railway line to the northwest. Given the extensive site area, the description that follows is divided into 3 parts reflecting the distinctively different nature of these areas, as shown on the Site Boundary Plan within the Design & Access Statement as figure 2.4:

- 1) The Botany Quarry area, which sits north of the Essex Thameside railway line;
- 2) The area between London Road and the Essex Thameside railway line; and,
- 3) The Riverside area, south of the Essex Thameside railway line.

i) The Botany Quarry Area

2.2 Botany Quarry is located to the north east of Purfleet railway station, which sits at the heart of the site on the Essex Thameside railway line. This area is characterised by commercial uses, which at present include various storage and distribution activities, industrial and commercial businesses and some derelict land. There is a primary access into this area from the A1090 arterial road across the High Speed 1 railway line. This connects in turn to the A13 strategic trunk route to the north. Local access can also be gained from London Road to the south via Botany Way.

2.3 The topography of Botany Quarry is typical of it being a former mineral working. Those areas with the most dramatic changes in height are associated with the cliff faces located on southern eastern perimeter of the former quarry. The site rises gradually from south to north. Parts of the existing cliff faces form the Purfleet Chalk Pits Site of Special Scientific Interest (the SSSI). The SSSI designation derives from the site's geological interest. The sands and gravels which overlie the chalk that form the main part of the cliffs are terrace deposits associated with the ancient development of the River Thames.

2.4 Tree and shrub cover is generally restricted to the margins of the quarry including to the cliff faces and along the railway line and main access routes.

2.5 To the east and south east, and generally above the quarry, this area is bordered by residential properties accessed from London Road to the south and other business and storage and distribution activities, including the large Carpentry warehouse building.

ii) Land between London Road and the railway line

2.6 This area lying between London Road and the Essex Thameside railway line is generally given over to a range of industrial, storage and distribution and open storage activities with access from London Road, and a cluster of residential properties close to Purfleet railway station. Otherwise, the land is largely cleared and open. Its eastern portion is within the Zone subject to HSE consultation distances associated with the nearby Purfleet Esso fuels terminal. These serve to restrict the types of development and uses likely to be acceptable in close proximity to the fuel terminal. As with the Botany Quarry to the north of London Road, there is limited tree and shrub cover, with these generally being restricted to the margins of this area, such as along the railway line.

iii) Land South of the Railway Line

- 2.7 This area broadly lies between the railway line on its northern boundary and the River Thames to the south. London Road crosses the Essex Thameside railway line via a level crossing adjacent to Purfleet railway station. The railway station comprises a single storey, flat roof station building and small adjacent car park and dropping off area. To the west of the station and its car park is a wooded area and beyond this in turn the former Cornwall House depot and yard site. Beyond this in turn, to the west, sits an irregularly shaped parcel of land this is largely wooded, known as Hollow Woods. This forms part of the Purfleet Conservation Area. Hollow Cottages, a terrace of Grade 2 listed buildings adjoins this area to the west, whilst the modern residential estate of Caspian Way sits to the north. London Road and Botany Cottages, a small residential terrace form the southern fringe. There is one building within Hollow Woods, Harlow Cottage, which was the subject of Conservation Area Consent for its demolition (granted by Thurrock Council in December 2011). Permission for this demolition also forms part of the present application proposals.
- 2.8 South of Essex Thameside railway line is a long strip of land fronting the River Thames. It has largely been cleared and remediated. At its western end is the Yara Terminal jetty, projecting out into the river. Beyond this and outside the site is a riverside residential development and walkway, known as Harrisons Wharf. About midway along the river frontage within the site is another larger jetty projecting out into the river, known as Cory's Wharf. Access into this area is gained from London Road to the north and also via a level crossing at its eastern end connecting again to London Road. The eastern part of the site is subject to the various HSE consultation distances drawn around the Purfleet Esso Fuels terminal site.

3. The Proposed Development

3.1 The planning application as made by Purfleet Centre Regeneration Limited (PCRL) which is a joint venture company established to deliver the proposed development. Swan Housing Association is the joint venture partner in PCRL. PCRL was selected by Thurrock Council in March 2014 as its development partner for this purpose.

3.2 It is intended that the development should be undertaken in phases and will, when completed, provide:

- Up to 2,850 new homes;
- A new town centre;
- A primary school and a secondary school;
- A film and TV studio complex; and,
- Accommodation for a variety of other businesses and employers.

3.3 These uses will be supported through significant provision of new infrastructure, including:

- The provision of four grade separated crossings of the Essex Thameside railway line;
- Other improved roads and accesses;
- An upgraded railway station, with provision of a temporary railway station whilst these upgrade works are taking place;
- Improvements to the river edge; and,
- Local waste and power facilities;

3.4 In summary, the aims of the proposed development are;

- To create a new centre for Purfleet with a clear sense of place offering a wide range of community, social and educational facilities;
- To provide housing of a variety of types and forms of uses in an accessible location;
- To create high quality, diverse employment opportunities; and,
- Accessible leisure and recreational spaces and places readily available to existing and new communities and visitors.

3.5 The application submitted to the Council is for Outline Planning Permission with all detailed matters reserved apart from access.

3.6 The description of the development proposed by the application for outline planning permission is as follows:

'Application for outline planning permission, with all matters reserved for subsequent approval, except for means of access, for mixed-use redevelopment involving the demolition of existing buildings and other structures; site preparation works; and the development of up to 2,850 Dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) comprising a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom units including affordable housing; up to 11,000 sq.m (floorspace) of Business uses (Use Class B1); up to 8,880 sq.m (floorspace) of Shops (Use Class A1); up to 5,220 sq.m (floorspace) of Restaurants and Cafes (Use Class A3); up to 900 sq.m (floorspace) Drinking Establishments (Use Class A4); up to 20,000 sq.m (floorspace) of Hotel accommodation (Use Class C1); up to 18,300 sq.m (floorspace) of Non-residential Institutions uses, comprising a Primary School, Secondary School and Sixth Form, Medical and Community uses (Use Class D1); up to 6,200 sq.m (floorspace) of Assembly and Leisure Uses (Use Class D2); up to 135,000 sq.m (floorspace together with external backlot production space) film and television production space including ancillary workshops, offices and post production facilities and ancillary infrastructure, together with ancillary car park; up to 1,600 sq.m (floorspace) of new and temporary railway station and local waste and power facilities (Sui Generis); all together with associated vehicle parking, open space, landscape and public realm provision; highways, pedestrian and vehicular access routes, and other associated engineering, utilities and infrastructure works including but not limited to, alterations to the river wall, repair and reinstatement of jetties, the provision of four grade separated railway crossings including a new bridge as part of the reprofiling and realignment of London Road'.

4. Planning Context

- 4.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the “Development Plan” for an area unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section therefore identifies the Development Plan policies that apply in this instance. A detailed assessment of the proposal against the policies of the Development Plan is contained at Appendix A to the Sustainability Statement.
- 4.2 The Development Plan for the Purfleet area is made up of the Thurrock Core Strategy Local Plan as amended in January 2015 and Saved Policies contained within the Thurrock Borough Local Plan 1997. This section seeks to identify the component parts of the Development Plan and the applicable policies that are contained within it. An appraisal of the proposed development against these policies is set out within the Planning Policy Review that is contained within the Sustainability Statement.

The Thurrock Core Strategy Local Plan

- 4.3 The Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development Local Plan (the Core Strategy) is the main local planning document contained within the Core Strategy Local Plan. It sets out a spatial vision strategy and planning policies for Thurrock. The Core Strategy was originally adopted in December 2011. It was subsequently updated in January 2015, following a focused review of its contents to ensure continued consistency with national planning policies. The Core Strategy comprises of three types of policies. Firstly, ‘spatial’ policies (with the pre-fix CSSP) set the scene and set out the spatial distribution and broad locations of development, and allocations and key strategic schemes throughout Thurrock. Secondly, ‘thematic’ policies (with the pre-fix CSTP) provide further detail. Finally, ‘development management’ policies (with the pre-fix PMD) provide the basis for control and management of development.
- 4.4 Before setting out the spatial, thematic and development management policies for Thurrock, Chapter 3 of the Core Strategy sets out supporting text concerned with ‘the future of Thurrock’. In doing so, five Key Areas of Regeneration and Growth Locations are identified, the first of which is Purfleet. Paragraphs 3.20 – 3.23 then explain that regeneration at Purfleet will be founded on the development of a mix of dwellings, employment and community facilities focus around a new centre adjoining the railway station and that approximately 3,000 new dwellings will be built.

Spatial Policies

- 4.5 The Key Diagram within the Core Strategy identifies central Purfleet as including land for new development, as well as primary industrial and commercial areas. The spatial vision for the area set out in the Core Strategy (see paragraphs 3.20 to 3.23 therein for details) highlights Purfleet as being a key area for such regeneration and growth. This is intended to be founded on the development of a mix of dwellings, employment and community facilities focused around a new centre adjoining the railway station and riverside. It anticipated approximately 3,000 new homes could be built of a variety of dwelling types, along with new neighbourhood facilities, and additional employment, cultural, education, and leisure opportunities.
- 4.6 Core Strategy Policy CSSP1 (Sustainable Housing and Locations) envisages that around 3,180 dwellings could be delivered at Purfleet in the period between 2009 and 2021. Likewise, Policy CSSP 2 envisages establishing a network of high quality Key Strategic Economic Hubs, include Purfleet. Policy CSSP3 refers to sustainable infrastructure including schools and medical centres. Indicatively, around 2,800 new jobs could be created in the Purfleet area. Policy CSSP5 is also applicable which concerns the delivery of a ‘Greengrid’ Strategy for Thurrock.

Thematic Policies

- 4.7 Policy CSTP1 (Strategic Housing Provision) sets out Thurrock Council’s approach to housing density, delivery numbers, mix and lifetime and accessible homes standards. In doing so, the policy seeks to secure a minimum density of 60 dwellings per hectare within the regeneration area. The policy also requires new development to provide a range of dwelling types and to meet Lifetime Homes standards etc.

- 4.8 In order to meet current and future demands for affordable housing in Thurrock, Policy CSTP2 (Provision of Affordable Housing) seeks a minimum provision of 35% of the total number of residential units to be built and provided as affordable housing. On qualifying sites this is subject to the suitability of onsite provision, the economics of providing such affordable housing, and the extent to which the provision of affordable housing would prejudice achieving other planning objectives. The mix of units necessary to meet local needs and achieve a successful sustainable and socially inclusive development will also be taken into account.
- 4.9 Policy CSTP5 highlights the designation of Purfleet as a priority regeneration area. Development in the regeneration area is expected to support and assist the creation of more balanced housing stock. This is sought through the development of high quality new dwellings that offer a better choice of housing types and tenures as well as, inter alia, the improvement and provision of community facilities and infrastructure. The policy also seeks enhancement of the area's economic viability by promoting the creation of business space for new start ups and local businesses, as well as seeking a high standard of sustainable construction and design.
- 4.10 Policy CSTP6 (Strategic Employment Provision) commits the Council to actively seek to maintain high and stable levels of economic employment growth within the network of high quality Key Strategic Economic Hubs, identified within Policy CSSP2. As identified earlier, this includes Purfleet. Within such areas, the Council is committed to safeguarding existing primary and secondary industrial and commercial land where it is required to maintain a sufficient supply of employment land. The Policy also encourages development that maximises the employment contribution from mixed use development schemes. In addition to those sites likely to be allocated for other uses, the Council will accept the redevelopment of genuinely redundant or underused employment land provided it can be demonstrated that, inter alia, the proposals are compliant with other development plan policies. Policy CSTP6 also commits the Council to working with partners to enhance local employment opportunities within the regeneration areas. This includes directing knowledge based, cultural, retail, leisure and office development to existing centres and the regeneration areas to promote their vitality and viability. The list of these priority centres includes Purfleet.
- 4.11 Core Strategy Policy CSTP7 (Network of Centres) designates a new local centre at Purfleet and encourages the inclusion of a new food store within it of between 1,500 and 2,000 sq m net convenience retail floor space.
- 4.12 Policy CSTP8 (Vitality and Viability of Existing Centres) promotes the maintenance of the retail function of existing centres. In order to assist with the assessment of the retail proposals made within the submitted planning application, in accordance with the aims of policies CSTP7 and CSTP8 a Retail Impact Assessment is provided as part of the application materials.
- 4.13 Policy CSTP9 (Wellbeing: Sport and Leisure) confirms that the Council and its Partners will support the delivery of a physically active, socially inclusive and healthy community through the provision of high quality sports and leisure facilities. In order to do so, the policy safeguards existing facilities and sets out a number of measures to support and promote new facilities.
- 4.14 Policy CSTP10 (Community Facilities) states that Thurrock Council will work with the relevant partners on a number of key projects, including the delivery of a multifunctional hub community centre at Purfleet.
- 4.15 Policy CSTP11 (Health Provision) supports the development of health centres with community and extended services at locations across the Borough, including at Purfleet. This policy notes that over the next 10 years the population of Purfleet is expected to increase linked to new residential development. Consequently health care facilities will be needed to meet new demand so the level and timing of such provision will depend on the phasing of the new development.
- 4.16 Policy CSTP12 (Education and Learning), under the heading of primary education, notes the Council has outlined a programme of refurbishment, expansion and new school provision to support long term growth, including within the regeneration areas. This includes provision of a new primary school in Purfleet.
- 4.17 Policy CSTP14 (Transport in the Thurrock Urban Area: Purfleet to Tilbury) seeks to reduce car use in the Thurrock Urban Area to deliver a 10% reduction from forecast 2026 levels. The policy seeks to achieve this through various measures, from encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport, through to public realm improvements.
- 4.18 Policy CSTP15 (Transport in Greater Thurrock) seeks to improve accessibility in Thurrock, especially to workplaces. The policy seeks to achieve this by various measures, ranging from the integration of public transport services, through to the creation of cycleway and footway links and implementation of Travel Plans.
- 4.19 Policy CSTP18 (Green Infrastructure) sets out the Council's commitment to restoration, protection and enhancement of its green assets. In doing so, the Council requires the achievement of a net gain in Green Infrastructure through new development.

- 4.20 Policy CSTEP19 (Biodiversity) confirms the Council's encouragement for measures to contribute positively to the overall biodiversity in the Borough. A number of measures are identified through which this will be achieved, including by way of the network of locally and nationally designated sites, biodiversity management, key sites, recognition of climate change and habitat loss, and Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plans.
- 4.21 Policy CSTEP20 (Open Space) confirms the Council's commitment to the provision of a range of accessible public open spaces, including natural spaces and those that are equipped for play. The Policy identifies Purfleet as a particular area where there is a deficiency of open space and requires proposals to ensure that proposals for new development ensure for provision of a range of accessible and high quality open spaces.
- 4.22 Policy CSTEP22 (Design) confirms the Council's promotion of high quality design in Thurrock. To achieve this, the policy requires proposals to demonstrate high quality design which take account of positive characteristics of areas within Thurrock. Accessibility and sustainability considerations are also key areas of this policy.
- 4.23 Policy CSTEP23 (Character and Distinctiveness) sets out the Council's commitment to protection, management and enhancement of the character of Thurrock to ensure for improved quality and strengthened sense of place. The policy identifies that character is a key issue in Regeneration areas and requires the retention and enhancement of significant existing features within sites.
- 4.24 Policy CSTEP25 (Addressing Climate Change) requires applicants to address climate change through adaption and mitigation measures. In terms of the former, the policy cites various low carbon technologies and in terms of the latter, the policy sets CO2 reduction targets according to defined development sectors.
- 4.25 Policy CSTEP26 (Renewable or Low Carbon Energy) seeks to promote the generation of low carbon energy as part of new development, such as through solar panels, biomass heating and small-scale wind turbines. The policy states that the Council will regard an application as being unacceptable if significant adverse impacts cannot be mitigated.
- 4.26 Policy CSTEP27 (Management of Flood Risk) seeks to ensure that flood risk management is implemented and supported through effective land use planning. Central to the policy's requirements is that of engagement with the Environment Agency. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems are also encouraged.
- 4.27 Policy CSTEP28 (River Thames) seeks to promote the economic and commercial function of the river and access to the river foreshore. Furthermore, the Policy requires the protection of key riverside features, such as the Thames Path and National Cycle Network Route 13.
- 4.28 Policy CSTEP29 (Waste Strategy) seeks to drive waste management up the waste hierarchy.

Development Management Policies

- 4.29 The Core Strategy also contains a variety of policies for the management of development and place making which are also relevant to consideration of the application. Policy PMD4 (Historic Environment) seeks to ensure that the fabric and setting of heritage assets is appropriately protected and enhanced in accordance with their significance. In light of this, the application provides consideration of the heritage impacts of the proposal, which considers its relationship with the Conservation Area, and that of the demolition of a non Listed building (Harlow Cottage) within the Conservation Area. In the interest of brevity, and aside from Policy PMD4, it is not intended to summarise all potentially relevant policies here. However, attention is drawn to the inclusion of policies in respect of;
- i) Policy PMD1 (Minimising Pollution and Impact on Amenity)
 - ii) Policy PMD2 (Design and Layout)
 - iii) Policy PMD3 (Tall Buildings)
 - iv) Policy PMD5 (Open Spaces and Recreational facilities)
 - v) Policy PMD7 (Biodiversity Geological Conservation and Development)
 - vi) Policy PMD8 (Parking Standards)
 - vii) Policy PMD 9 (Road and Network Hierarchy)
 - viii) Policy PMD10 (Transport Assessments and Travel Plans)
 - ix) Policy PMD12 (Sustainable Buildings)
 - x) Policy PMD13 (Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation)
 - xi) Policy PMD14 (Carbon Neutral Development)
 - xii) Policy PMD15 (Flood Risk Assessment)

Saved Policies Contained within the Thurrock Borough Local Plan 1997

4.30 Most previously Saved Borough Local Plan policies have now been superseded by the adoption of the Core Strategy. However, it is considered that the only saved policy which is directly relevant to the application site is Policy E9 concerning oil and chemical storage, which is shown on the Proposals Map to relate to part of the site.

The Emerging Development Plan

4.31 The Council is now preparing a new Local Plan, which, once adopted, will replace the remaining Saved Local Plan Policies and the Core Strategy. This work is at an early stage, with the Council having consulted upon 'Issues and Options' for the Local Plan in February 2016. Owing to the nature of the consultation, it included no proposed planning policies, but sought views upon the policy issues and options that are available to the Council.

Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation and Previously Emerging Planning Policy

4.32 Although not part of the Development Plan, it is relevant to note as historical background that the proposals for the comprehensive regeneration of Purfleet have a long pedigree. The former Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation acted as the local planning authority for strategic planning applications until March 2012. Subsequently those roles and responsibilities were passed to Thurrock Council. As part of its remit, the Development Corporation produced a number of non-statutory planning guidance documents, including for Purfleet. These all predate the adopted Core Strategy.

4.33 In 2007, the Development Corporation published a 'Purfleet Masterplan' which identified the need for a strategic approach to be taken towards growth in Purfleet. Elements of the vision for the future of Purfleet included:

- Improving public facilities and the public realm;
- Building a new town centre, based around the railway station;
- Creating a mixed use community;
- Enhancing the opportunities presented by the River Thames, including the creation of a riverside walkway; and,
- Contributing to the long term prosperity of Purfleet and the surrounding area through the development of high quality housing, community and leisure facilities, employment opportunities and attractive areas of open space.

- 4.34 In September 2009, the Development Corporation also produced a more detailed 'Purfleet Centre Development Framework'. The aim of this was to expand upon the aims set out in the 2007 Purfleet Masterplan. The Framework expressed many of the principles set out in the masterplan in spatial terms, including proposing that the new centre for Purfleet should be located around the railway station and that any such development should include an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures and seek the delivery of new, higher added value employment opportunities etc.
- 4.35 It is also relevant to acknowledge that Thurrock Council was previously preparing a Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document which was intended to articulate the policies of the Core Strategy in site specific terms. That work reached a 'Further Issues and Options' stage in 2013, but this was subsequently indefinitely suspended following the Council's decision to effectively complete this work within the context of a 'new style' Local Plan, in accordance with current regulations for Development Plan production. In taking this new approach, the Council will be provided with the opportunity to reassess the continued appropriateness of its previously emerging site specific proposals in light of up to date evidence, which will notably include that in relation to overall growth requirements. Despite the 'indefinitely suspended' status of the previously emerging site specific work, it therefore remains a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, to which due weight should be attached.
- 4.36 The Further Issues and Options version of the Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document included maps suggesting appropriate sites to meet the strategic aims of Policy CSTP6. In consequence, it included a proposed Key Area Statement and site specific proposals map for the Purfleet Urban Regeneration Area. The relevant statement noted that the regeneration of Purfleet would be founded on the development of a mix of dwellings, employment and community facilities focused around a new centre, adjoining the railway station and riverside. The map accompanying this statement identified a number of housing sites both with and without planning permission. This map also identified possible areas for mixed use development, employment uses and broad locations for additional retail areas, leisure, and community facilities etc. Finally, Appendix 6 of the document highlighted two areas of Purfleet as potentially being suitable locations for tall buildings – east of the railway station, and adjacent to the river at Cory's Wharf.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.37 National planning policies constitute guidance for local planning authorities and decision makers, both in drawing up local plans and as a material consideration in determining applications. These are mainly set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) published in March 2012.
- 4.38 The overarching policy objective of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This is seen by Government as the "golden thread" that should run through both plan making and decision taking. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that, for decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. Where the development plan is absent or silent, or where policies are out of date, then planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impact would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. A further important feature of the NPPF is the culture change it requires from local planning authorities. It encourages local planning authorities to approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, looking for solutions rather than problems, and seeking to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (see NPPF Paragraphs 186-187).
- 4.39 The following headings and summary of some of the contents of the NPPF are considered to be materially relevant to the consideration of the current proposals.

Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

- 4.40 The government are committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. (NPPF paragraph 19)

Promoting Sustainable Transport

4.41 Decisions should take account of whether opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up, depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure. Also, whether there is safe and suitable access to the site, and whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development (NPPF Paragraph 32).

4.42 Decisions should ensure that developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised (NPPF paragraph 34).

Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes

4.43 Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF paragraph 49).

4.44 To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:

- Plan for a mix of housing based current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community;
- Identify the size, type and tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand; and,
- Where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set out policies for meeting this need on site, unless offsite provision can be justified (NPPF paragraph 50).

Requiring Good Design

4.45 Government also attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of such sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning and to contribute positively to making places better for people (NPPF paragraph 56).

Promoting Healthy Communities

4.46 The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve places which promote:

- Opportunities for meetings between members of the community which might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages;
- Safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and,
- Safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public open spaces which encourage the act of continuing use of public areas (NPPF paragraph 69).

4.47 The Government also attaches great importance to ensuring a sufficient choice of school places is available. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice and education (NPPF paragraph 72).

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change

4.48 In determining planning applications local planning authorities should expect new development to:

- comply with adopted local policies for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated having regard to the type of development involved and its design that this is not feasible or viable; and
- take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption (NPPF paragraph 96).

4.49 Furthermore, inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing it away from the areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere (NPPF paragraph 99).

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

4.50 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying, amongst others, the following principles:

- If significant harm from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or as a last resort compensated for, then planning permission should be refused; and,
- Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged (NPPF paragraph 118).

4.51 Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously been developed (brownfield land) provided that it is not of high environmental value (NPPF paragraph 111).

Conserving and Enhancing Historic Environment

4.52 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the positive contribution the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (NPPF paragraphs 131 -134).

5. Delivering the Development

- 5.1 The proposed comprehensive regeneration scheme is substantial in scale. It is also complex and contains a wide range of different land uses. In satisfaction of the objectives for the area set out in local policies and to fulfil the aspirations of PCRL as the applicant, it is intended to bring forward the scheme in a phased manner. The development of the site will thus proceed in an orderly manner in accordance with a phasing plan to be agreed. Achieving this aim is subject to a number of factors, however. For example, around half of the site is currently under the direct control of the Council, acting as a land owner. Negotiations are underway to acquire the remainder of the land required to deliver the development in its totality via negotiations between various land owners and the developers. In the event that such negotiations become unduly protracted or fail, then if it is considered to be in the public interest, compulsory purchase powers by the Council may be utilised as being necessary and justified in order to facilitate the delivery of this key area of regeneration and growth, as set out in local planning policies.
- 5.2 The NPPF advises that pursuing a sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan making and decision taking. Therefore, sites identified in Development Plans should not be subject to a scale of obligations and policy burdens such that their viable delivery is threatened. To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to the development, such as requirements for affordable housing, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal costs of development and mitigation, still provide competitive returns to the land owner and developer to enable the development to be deliverable.
- 5.3 The development will be supported by the timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to provide balanced, more self sufficient communities and to secure a modal shift away from car use. Accordingly, the development will make direct provision towards local and strategic infrastructure. Where it does not so directly deliver such measures and these are considered to be necessary, the applicants will seek to agree infrastructure provision with the Council having regards to NPPF paragraphs 204-206 and CIL Regulation 122. Thus, any financial contributions should be:
- Necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms;
 - Directly related to the proposed development; and,
 - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development
- 5.4 A new Community Infrastructure Levy is intended to be put in place alongside the emerging replacement Local Plan for Thurrock. Until this is prepared, developer contributions will be sought in accordance with the policies of the Core Strategy, and particularly PMD16 (Developer Contributions) therein. Under this policy, the Council seeks to ensure that development proposals where appropriate contribute to the delivery of strategic infrastructure to enable the cumulative impact of development to be managed, meet the reasonable cost of new infrastructure, mitigate and compensate for loss of any significant amenity resource, and provide for the ongoing maintenance of facilities required as a result of the development.
- 5.5 Policy PMD16 sets out a wide range of matters that may be covered by such obligations. It is presently envisaged, having regard to the provisions of Policy PMD16, that contributions are likely to relate to the following areas:
- The provision of a fair proportion of affordable housing subject to viability;
 - Education and training;
 - Transport infrastructure;
 - Community, cultural and social infrastructure;
 - The built environment; and,
 - Utilities.
- 5.6 At the earliest opportunity the applicant will work with Thurrock, as a local planning authority, to agree an appropriate range of such obligations at the earliest reasonable opportunity to enable determination of the application. Such agreement and its obligations will also thus impact on the timing and delivery of the scheme.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This planning application is the result of a substantial amount of preparatory work and the culmination of a long process. It has been carefully prepared and the local community and a wide range of stake holders have been engaged with its evolution, explanation of which is provided within the submitted Statement of Community Involvement.
- 6.2 The Development Plan for the area anticipates such a mixed use regeneration scheme taking place at Purfleet. This planning application and its proposals are considered by the applicants to be in accordance with the aims and objectives of that Development Plan.
- 6.3 The application has also been prepared having due regard to the provisions of national planning policy, including the NPPF. Having regard to the balance between its impact and benefits, the applicant holds the view in submitting the application that its benefits indeed significantly and demonstrably outweigh its adverse impacts. The applicants also identify certain key benefits which support the case for granting planning permission. These include:
- The delivery of a substantial number of new homes, including affordable housing subject to viability;
 - The creation of a significant quantity of new employment opportunities;
 - The provision of new and sustainable infrastructure, including enhanced rail, other public transport, road, foot and cycle access;
 - Facilitating the delivery of new education, community and social facilities; and
 - Providing for enhanced access to open space and recreation opportunities.
- 6.4 These proposals will deliver a major, multi million pound investment in new homes, jobs, and infrastructure of key local significance. The stimulation of growth in this manner can help deliver a wide range of benefits, including those set out above, as well as fulfilling long established aims and objectives for the renaissance of Purfleet.



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