

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF STRATHMORE ROAD SITE

Planning Policy Position

It is recognised that Policy LP 28 of the Local Plan seeks to resist the loss of community facilities unless it can be shown that the facilities are no longer needed or that the service could be adequately re-provided in a different way or elsewhere in a convenient alternative location; and the potential for re-using or developing the site of the same or alternative social infrastructure use has been fully explored. If this evidence is provided the policy states that employment generating uses or wholly affordable housing schemes should be considered.

The supporting text to the policy states, "If a public disposal process has taken place as part of an agreed programme of social infrastructure re-provision which confirms that the disposal of assets is necessary to ensure continued delivery of social infrastructure and related services, this will be taken into account by the Council when assessing proposals against the criteria set out in this policy"

Further, the site is identified as a Site Allocation SA7: *"Social and community infrastructure uses and/or an affordable housing scheme with on-site car parking are the most appropriate land uses for this site"*.

This site has an existing social infrastructure use, which provides a complete range of child-care services for children up to and including Year 6, as well as acting as a nursery to pre-school aged children.

- There is an increasing need for the provision for childcare facilities and nurseries in the borough.
- This site, due to its location in a primarily residential area and its proximity to Stanley School and St James's school, makes it ideal for the provision of nurseries and other child-care services.
- Proposed redevelopment will only be acceptable if the current child-care provision is adequately re-provided in a different way, including the provision of appropriate outside space and parking related to the childcare services, or elsewhere in a convenient alternative location accessible to the current community it supports.
- Only if other alternative social or community infrastructure uses have been explored and options discounted in line with other policies in this Plan, would an affordable housing scheme with on-site car parking be considered as a potential redevelopment option.

Any requirement to undertake a marketing exercise for the site, as required by Policy LP 28, would represent a significant constraint and delay to the redevelopment and provision of the affordable housing.

The site was previously used by Youth Offending Service. These services closed circa 2010 and relocated to Oldfield House as they were no longer required for this purpose or any other purpose that could be identified by the Council. Therefore, the buildings have remained shut (apart from the SCAMP's nursery) for over 7 years. It should be noted however that the Council's commitment is to provide a nursery provider with a new facility which meets the needs of a nursery, as confirmed by AfC, given that the buildings are not fit for purpose due to the condition of the buildings which require significant investment and upgrade.

Consequently, the site was declared surplus to the Council's requirement (as the Council no longer has a need for the property) by Cabinet in November 2010 see <https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/documents/g2488/Public%20reports%20pack%20Monday%2008-Nov-2010%2019.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10> and the site has remained on the Council's disposal list, which is a publicly accessible document, since that time with periodic updates reported to the Council's Cabinet see this link for copies of the reports <https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?XXR=0&&DR=26%2f09%2f2010-10%2f10%2f2018&ACT=Find&RP=0&K=0&V=2&DM=0&HD=0&DS=0&Next=true&T=505628764&NOW=091018130643&META=mgdelegateddecisions> and which was done as recently as June 2018 - <https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=4220> . In that time no group has come forward and identified a need for a community facility and the Council's position has remained that it does not have a use for the buildings.

The importance of retaining D1 use on the site to meet an identified need is recognised in the current development proposals which consists of a new fit for purpose nursery that would be used by SCAMPs. Since October 2017 SCAMPs, Achievement for Children and Property Services have worked together to design a new nursery that would cater for SCAMP's requirements or any other nursery user and the design has been incorporated into the applicant's scheme.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan was last updated in 2017.

The plan identified the ability to provide sufficient affordable housing in the borough continues to pose a challenge.

The Local Plan is informed by an up to date borough-wide Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2016). Another indicator of demand is the Richmond Housing Register. According to the Council's Housing Register as at March 2017 there were 2196 households on the Housing Register who have been assessed by the Council to be a reasonable preference category (i.e. having more acute needs). This total includes 201 homeless households for whom the Council accepts it has a duty (under the Housing Act 1996 S193 (2)). Some households on the housing register face issues such as affordability in buying or renting at market levels, overcrowding and poor housing conditions'.

Housing and planning colleagues work closely together, with registered providers and the GLA (who act as the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) in London), to maximise affordable housing and there is a commitment to maximise resources for schemes that are of a high quality of design and meet the needs of the most vulnerable. It is only through utilisation of Council sites such as this one, that will deliver a 100% affordable housing scheme, that the levels of affordable housing delivery can be maintained or ideally increased not least to get nearer to meeting the Council's affordable delivery targets.

The Borough's Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the period 2014 -2033 identified a net deficit of 964 affordable homes per annum. Bringing forward this site will be in the public interest to help address the urgent demand for affordable housing in the borough for both low cost rented and low cost sale for which there is an evident need. All nominations for the affordable housing when complete will come to the borough and the Council through its tenancy strategy and intermediate housing policy will ensure the homes are affordable and targeted to borough residents.

The applicant, a Registered Provider proposes a development that will reprovide the nursery which is a key objective for the Council who will retain ownership of this building and 100% affordable housing across the site. The Registered Provider has an excellent track record of delivering 100% affordable housing schemes in the borough and is confident that GLA grant funding will be available to support this development. The Council's adopted Local Plan 2018, Policy LP 36, seeks 50% affordable housing in a tenure mix of 80% rent and 20% shared ownership.

The applicants proposals for the site are for 43 dwellings, 100% affordable housing in a notional mix of 80% rent and 20% intermediate housing, subject to viability and are therefore in line with Council priorities asset out in LP 36 of the Local Plan. The scheme proposes that 24% of the rented units are larger family sized accommodation and that overall 80% of all the homes will be family sized dwellings. One and two bedroom dwellings are proposed for the intermediate housing to ensure the homes can be sold in line with the Councils adopted intermediate housing affordability criteria. The rented units will meet the affordability criteria as set out in the Councils Tenancy Strategy. In addition 39 of the homes will meet Building regulations M4 (2) and 4 (10%) with meet M4 (3)

The scheme therefore meets the Council's affordable housing priorities and will make a significant contribution to meeting the affordable housing deficit identified in the SHMA.