



LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**REGENERATION AND PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

22 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 13:45

Agenda Item No:

6

Report No:

RP/23/18

**PLANNING CONSULTATION FROM LB TOWER HAMLETS
ON A HYBRID APPLICATION FOR A COMPREHENSIVE MIXED
USE DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING OUTLINE PARAMETERS
FOR 195,000SM FLOOR SPACE AND A DETAILED
APPLICATION FOR A FURTHER 66,000SM OF MIXED USE
DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING 1ha LOCAL PARK, AT THE
FORMER POPLAR GASWORKS, LEVEN ROAD.**

Presented by the Head of Planning and Strategic Partnerships

SUMMARY

The application is for a comprehensive redevelopment of the site of the former Poplar Gasworks at Leven Road. Although the site lies outside the statutory boundary of the Regional Park, part of the site has been identified for public open space in the proposed Lea River Park. The proposed Lea River Park is designed to extend down from the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to the Thames in line with the original Abercrombie Vision for the whole Regional Park. Whilst the proposal will include a public park of 1ha this falls short of the 7.85ha of Park which was originally envisaged in the adopted Opportunity Area Planning Framework for the Lower Lea. Further, the proposed redevelopment scheme does not include land or moneys to secure the provision of a bridge over the River Lea in line with the Framework. Given that the Authority endorsed the creation of the Lea River Park an objection is recommended.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members Approve:

- (1) the Authority objects to the proposed scheme in that the proposed allocation of just 1ha of public park and the omission of the proposed bridge will undermine the whole basis of the proposed Lea River Park which is designed to create strategic green infrastructure to complement the housing growth in the Lower Lea Valley.

BACKGROUND

- 1 The 1944 Greater London Plan identified the vision which led to the creation of the Regional Park through the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966. The Regional Park's statutory boundary did not originally include a contiguous area of land extending along the Lea Valley to the Thames and it was left to the Authority to obtain sites when opportunities arose. For example, both Bow Creek and the East India Dock Basin were 'gifted' to the Authority on the cessation of the former London Dockland Development Corporation (LDDC). The delivery of the Abercrombie Vision through the Lower Lea Valley subsequently became the responsibility of the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC), which pursued the delivery of open space as part of a wider regeneration programme. The Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Framework (OAPF 2007) identified a park of 7.85ha on the application site.
- 2 The Authority worked closely with the LTGDC from its inception in 2004 and in February 2008 (Paper A/3975/08) agreed in principle the aspiration to deliver a new linear park in the lower Lea Valley. This was designed to link, via a new pedestrian and cycle route, originally called the 'Fat Walk', (now referred to as the Lea River Path) to existing spaces at Three Mills Green and East India Dock Basin and to new parks proposed for four other sites including former gasworks at Twelve Trees and Leven Road. The LTGDC prepared numerous design frameworks and feasibility documents but on its cessation work ceased. Critical work on securing the confirmation of compulsory purchase orders (CPO) and planning permissions required to secure the route of the pathway, location of bridge piers and a Primer and Design Manual was completed as a distinct project by the London Legacy Development Corporation.
- 3 Policy support for the Lea River Park (LRP) and Lea River Path is now included in the emerging Local Plans of both Newham and Tower Hamlets and both Councils have a shared aspiration to deliver the new park and pathway.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4 The application site comprises 8.3ha and is largely cleared as the former gasholders were removed in 2016. The site is bounded on the north and western side by the River Lea and on the southern side by Leven Road. The scheme has been submitted as a hybrid application for 195,000sm of floor space to include residential units, associated retail services, a secondary school, community uses and the formation of a public park of 1ha. The application anticipates that 2,800 new homes will be developed once the whole scheme is built out. The public park would be in addition to private play/amenity space required for each residential unit.
- 5 The scheme identifies that the detailed or 'full' application will include 580 new dwellings. These will be arranged in four large blocks each ranging in height from between 4 -12 storeys. The proposed public park would straddle both phases of development and is proposed be located adjacent to the Lea River at the western part of the site.
- 6 The LRP identified a requirement not just for a public park within this site but for a bridge connection to another area within the proposed LRP at Cody Dock across the River Lea. The application includes a 'Connectivity Study' which states that the site already 'benefits' from relatively good existing links to local stations. A series of plans identify the site's permeability and a Wayfinding

strategy is included as part of the application which will be the subject of a planning condition in the event of permission being granted. The Connectivity Study states that both the CPO and planning permissions for the bridge connection have expired and that there are problems in securing the agreement of the land owner of the site across the Lea for the proposed bridge landing.

APPRAISAL

- 7 It is not intended within this section to provide comment on the merits of the whole scheme given its location outside the Regional Park and references are only made in this section to the likely impacts of the scheme on the Authority's shared aspiration to deliver the Lea River Park and Path.
- 8 The concept of the proposed LRP was to create a new park with a distinct character derived from the individual identity of each space and the design quality of the connections which together would create a new linear park. The 6 spaces within the LRP would be united by a common palette of materials and wayfinding. Permeability and connectivity underpin the concept of the LRP. The proposed Park within the site falls well short of the proposed size identified in the OAPF 2007. This undermines the whole basis of how well this Park could contribute to the wider LRP as a part of strategic green infrastructure designed to provide sufficient open space to offset the considerable growth anticipated for the lower Lea Valley.
- 9 Furthermore, the omission of the bridge which is an essential piece of kit required for the proposed LRP again undermines the purpose of the LRP. It is acknowledged that the developer has experienced difficulties in seeking to locate a landing for the proposed bridge on a site adjacent to Cody Dock. However, a commuted sum is required to enable this to be constructed at some future date given that the build out of this scheme will take several years. Without this commitment the proposed park will be only 'local' in nature serving just the proposed development.
- 10 Given that the delivery of the LRP runs as a common thread through the emerging local plans of both Newham and Tower Hamlets, planning obligations should be used to enable sufficient financial provision from developer contributions to enable the bridge to be delivered. This would allow the provision of green infrastructure for the Lower Lea Valley and deliver another step on Abercrombie's vision for this area of London. A failure to address this now would represent a failure of effective Planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11 These have been considered in the body of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12 Planning applications referred to this Authority are submitted under the consultative arrangements of Section 14 (4-7) of the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966. The Act requires a local planning authority to consult with the Authority on any planning application for development, whether within the designated area of the Park or not, which might affect any part of the Park.
- 13 The Park Act enables the Authority to make representations to the local planning authority which they shall take into account when determining the

planning application.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 14 There are no risk management implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 15 There are no equality implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

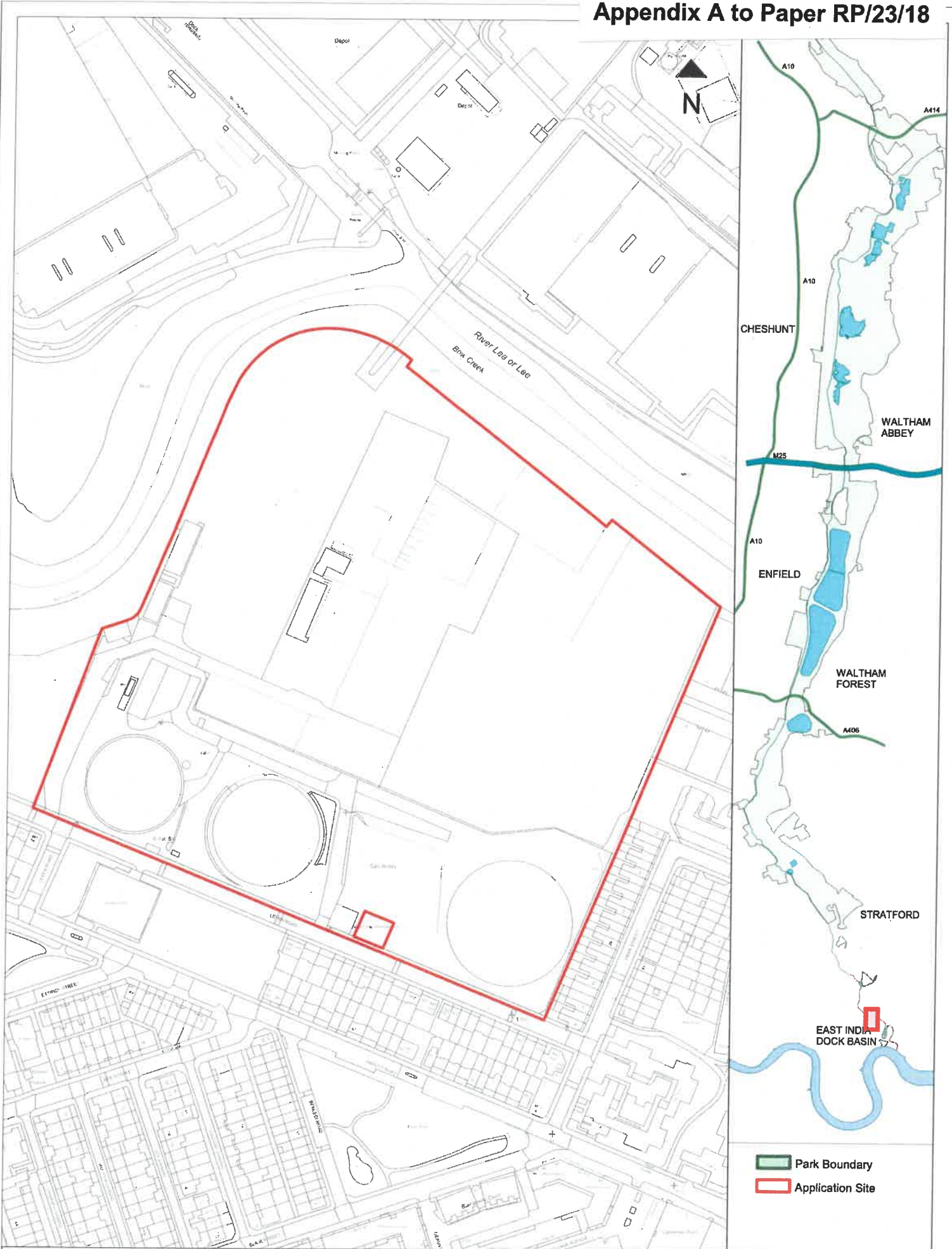
Author: Stephen Wilkinson, 01992 709828, swilkinson@leevalleypark.org.uk

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix A Site plan

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LDDC	London Dockland Development Corporation
LTGDC	London Thames Gateway Development Corporation
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
LRP	Lee River Park



Appendix A - Site plan

