

WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
(SHEERWATER REGENERATION)  
COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2020

**PLANNING STATEMENT**

**OF**

**JOANNE HOLLINGDALE**

PRINCIPAL PLANNING OFFICER, WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Joanne Hollingdale and I am a Principal Planning Officer at Woking Borough Council. I have worked as a planning officer for the Council for just over 6 years, and prior to that I held the position of Senior Planning Officer at Runnymede Borough Council for approximately 8 years. I hold a BSc (Hons) degree in City and Regional Planning and a post-graduate Diploma in Town Planning from the University of Wales, College of Cardiff. I have been a full Corporate Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute since October 2000. I have been a Local Government Planning Officer for nearly 23 years holding positions from Planning Assistant to Area Planning Officer (Chiltern District Council). I have extensive experience in dealing with large scale schemes including some complex redevelopment/regeneration schemes.
- 1.2 I have been the case officer for the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme (“the **Scheme**”) for around 5½ years. This has entailed dealing with all applications associated with the scheme so far, including planning applications, reserved matters, conditions and non-material amendment applications. .
- 1.3 My evidence will address:
- (a) Planning Permission for the Scheme;
  - (b) Compliance with Adopted Planning Framework;
  - (c) Conclusions

## 2. PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE SCHEME

- 2.1 The Council’s Scheme has the benefit of three planning permissions. The first is the detailed element of a hybrid planning permission, granted by the Local Planning Authority on 27 July 2016 – the 2015 Permission (CDA9).
- 2.2 This was subject to a Section 73 hybrid application (PLAN/2018/0374) approved on 18 April 2019 – the 2019 Permission (CDA13), together referred to in this Statement as the “Planning Permission”. The Planning Permission provides detailed planning consent for the earlier phases of the Scheme and outline planning consent for the Scheme as a whole.
- 2.3 A second hybrid planning application was also approved on 18 April 2019 (PLAN/2018/0337) – this Planning Permission provides detailed planning consent for a number of phases of the Scheme and outline planning consent for the Scheme as whole.
- 2.4 As discussed below in my statement, there is strong policy support for the Scheme at national and local level. Local policy refers specifically to Sheerwater’s designation as a Priority Place, identifying the area as being in need of targeted intervention by the Council, Surrey County Council and other public bodies.
- 2.5 Alongside the planning policy framework in support of the regeneration of the Order Land which is outlined below, the Scheme has the benefit of the Planning Permission.
- 2.6 The Planning Permissions authorise:
- (a) the demolition of 573 residential units, existing non-residential buildings and sports facilities upon the Order Land; and
  - (b) the comprehensive phased redevelopment of the Order Land to deliver approximately 1,142 new high quality residential dwellings which will include

approximately 619 dwellings for sale on the open market dwellings and approximately 523 'affordable' dwellings (of which 134 are specialist residential dwellings);

- (c) the provision of up to 134 specialist residential dwellings within Use Classes C2 and C3 of the Use Classes Order. These units will be self-contained affordable assisted living units, all of which will be compliant with Part M of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010;
- (d) the provision of:
  - a. a community centre;
  - b. a nursery/children's centre;
  - c. a Leisure Centre and artificial grass pitch with spectator seating;
  - d. flexible Retail Units;
  - e. a Health Centre;
  - f. significantly improved and enhanced public open space and public realm;
  - g. a new Sustainable Drainage (SUDs) scheme throughout the Order Land, enhancing and improving the drainage network and flood prevention infrastructure within the adjacent area; and
  - h. landscaping, improved pedestrian routes, car parking spaces and associated highway and other infrastructure, drainage, servicing and works

2.7 In broad terms, the Scheme involves the:

- (a) demolition of 573 residential units, non-residential buildings and sports facilities;
- (b) development of up to 1,142 residential units for a mix of open market sale (619) and affordable housing (523, of which 134 are specialist residential dwellings) and delivered on a phased basis as set out at Section 4.6 of this Statement;
- (c) provision of the following affordable housing units:
  - 134no. 1 bedroom units (specialist residential dwellings (further detail of these units is at 6.1(e) below))
  - 142no. 1 bedroom units
  - 155no. 2 bedroom units
  - 83no. 3 bedroom units
  - 9no. 4 bedroom units
- (d) development of high quality new homes and public realm;
- (e) provision of 134 Units of specialist residential accommodation within Classes C2 and C3 of the Use Classes Order, the units being self-contained affordable assisted living units (at a combination of social rent levels and affordable rent levels), all of which will be compliant with Part M of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010;
- (f) delivery of a community/youth centre of up to 904 square metres in area;
- (g) delivery of a nursery/children's centre of up to 929 square metres in area;
- (h) delivery of a new leisure centre of up to 5,478 square metres in area with enhanced leisure facilities, artificial grass pitch and spectator seating, sports amenity lighting and improvements to the Bishop David Brown School playing fields;

- (i) development of retail units of up to 1,845 square metres in area (to include flexible uses within Classes A1, A2, A3, A4 and/or A5 of the Use Classes Order);
- (j) provision of a health centre (dentist and health centre) of up to 444 square metres in area;
- (k) provision of additional classrooms (Class D1) of up to 290 square metres in area
- (l) extensive landscaping will be undertaken as part of the development to integrate the proposals into the surroundings and improve existing pedestrian routes so as to enhance the overall streetscape of the area;
- (m) provision of significantly enhanced open space with a multi-use games area and skate park;
- (n) provision of reconfigured vehicular and pedestrian accesses to improve public realm, enhance public safety and address the fear of crime and maximise controlled on-site parking;
- (o) stopping up of existing highways (in full and in some cases, partially); and,
- (p) provision of all necessary and associated infrastructure, drainage, servicing and works.

2.8 As both Local Planning Authority for the area in which the Order Land is situated, the majority landowner of the Order Land and the proposed Acquiring Authority under the Order, the Council was unable to enter into a Planning Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. However, the Council resolved to give effect to a number of "Executive Obligations" that take the place of planning obligations.

2.9 As the Council has acquired a significant number of properties within the Order Land, it has therefore become viable for THL and TDL to enter into Section 106 Agreements due to the land ownership position changing. Two Section 106 Agreements, one for each of the 2019 Permissions (the Section 73 permission PLAN/2018/0374 and the revised hybrid permission PLAN/2018/0337), have been entered into (both dated 17 April 2019 and made between the Council (1) THL (2) and TDL (3)). The Section 106 Agreements and Executive Obligations mirror each other and include:

- Obligations relating to the provision of Affordable Housing as part of the Scheme, including the number of units to be provided overall and on a phase-by-phase basis, the size and tenure make up of such units and the ownership of such units;
- Obligations relating to the SAMM (Strategic Access Management and Monitoring) Financial Contribution (to avoid/mitigate impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area);
- Obligations in connection with the implementation of a local labour agreement;
- Obligations in respect of off-site tree planting; and,
- Obligations in respect of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

### 3. COMPLIANCE WITH PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

#### Policy Background

- 3.1 The Scheme is in accordance with an up-to-date development plan. The Woking Local Development Document, entitled “Woking Core Strategy – October 2012” (“**Core Strategy**”)(**CDA3**) (in which Sheerwater is designated a Priority Place) was found sound and legally compliant by a Planning Inspector at Examination Hearings held between 20 March 2012 and 6 April 2012. With regard to Core Strategy Policy CS5 (Priority Places), the Inspector concluded that “*Overall, the evidence in relation to the settlement hierarchy and the intended levels of development is robust and supports adequately the likely effectiveness of the Core Strategy in such regards*”. The Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 25 October 2012.
- 3.2 In October 2016, the Council adopted the Development Management Policies DPD which provides specific policies to support the Core Strategy. Future reserved matters relating to the Scheme will be assessed against both the Core Strategy and this document.
- 3.3 Surrey County Council have adopted a Surrey Strategic Partnership Plan 2010-2020. While not a material consideration in planning terms, it is nonetheless one of the documents that forms the evidence base upon which the Core Strategy is based, particularly Core Strategy Policy CS5.

#### National Planning Policy

- 3.4 The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and recognises three dimensions of this – economic, social and environmental. Local authorities are encouraged to maintain an up-to-date development plan and the NPPF provides that planning applications in accordance with the development plan should be determined positively without delay (NPPF, para 11).
- 3.5 Among the many strategic objectives of the NPPF, those most relevant to the Scheme (but not the only objectives relevant to it) are: achieving sustainable development; delivering a sufficient supply of homes; building a strong, competitive economy; promoting healthy and safe communities, promoting sustainable transport; making effective use of land; and achieving well-designed places.
- 3.6 Paragraph 93 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should consider the social, economic and environmental benefits of estate regeneration. Local Planning Authorities should use their planning powers to help deliver estate regeneration to a high standard.

#### Regional Planning Policy

- 3.7 The Order Land is also covered by a saved policy from the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East, Policy NRM6: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. This policy requires that new residential development likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. The Scheme is in compliance with this policy.

## Local Planning Policy

- 3.8 The Council adopted its Core Strategy on 25 October 2012. The principal purpose of this document is to *“facilitate the delivery of a Borough of high environmental quality and standards where people choose to live, work and visit, an exemplar in the achievement of sustainable growth”*.
- 3.9 At section 2.0 of the Core Strategy, the Council identifies a lack of affordable housing and pockets of deprivation as specific weaknesses within a SWOT analysis of the issues facing the Council in the period to 2027.
- 3.10 Core Strategy Policy CS1 – A Spatial Strategy for Woking Borough. The Council’s Strategy is to deliver 4,964 net additional dwellings, with an overall affordable housing provision target of 35%, as well as additional office, warehousing and retail floor space. The Council will concentrate on housing growth in well located areas that provide an opportunity for growth, creating a sustainable quality environment that will have positive economic impacts, directing development to previously developed land in the town, district and local centres. The Sheerwater area is identified as a Priority Place *“for specific actions to address pockets of deprivation”*. The Council will target specific types of development to address the underlying causes of deprivation in those areas designated as Priority Places.
- 3.11 Core Strategy Policy CS5 – Priority Places. The Council will work with partners to target resources to Priority Places, including the ward of Maybury and Sheerwater. The Council will
- Enable the provision of around 250 additional homes in Maybury and Sheerwater to 2027. In Sheerwater these homes will primarily be provided by bringing forward land in the Council’s ownership for development.
  - Seek to address the current tenure imbalance by requiring new affordable housing dwellings to be family homes (2 bedrooms or more) and giving priority to intermediate rent and shared ownership tenures.
  - Safeguard land within existing employment areas and encourage proposals that create new opportunities for local employment within them.
  - Promote local labour agreements with developers to enable local people to secure employment and skills development.
  - Seek to increase the choice of retail offer in Sheerwater and support in principle the development of a convenience retail outlet, subject to assessing the full impacts of such proposal on the vitality and viability of the Sheerwater local centre.
  - Work with partners to achieve this, making use of CPO powers if necessary. Protect the vitality of the Sheerwater local centre to ensure the community has a genuine choice of shopping and services. The loss of existing retail units will be resisted in Sheerwater ( It is acknowledged that the Scheme does not comply with this part of Policy CS5 relating to the loss of existing retail units. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the Scheme is considered compliant with Policy CS5).
  - Seek to improve the image of Sheerwater by promoting high quality design of public realm, the enhancement of open spaces and public amenity areas. Proposals will be expected to have built in natural surveillance that designs out crime and fear of crime, creates direct, safe routes to neighbouring communities and nearby retail and commercial facilities and provides a safe environment.
  - Channel developer contributions to deliver infrastructure in line with relevant policies of the Core Strategy.
  - Work with Surrey County Council and public transport providers to improve bus services, existing cycle networks and provide secure cycle parking facilities. In

addition, to assess the role of parking provision to increase trade and protect businesses and promote investment in a local community transport scheme to increase access to services.

- Use its CPO powers and other means to assist with site assembly where it is necessary to do so.

The Scheme has been planned and designed to contribute towards the objectives of Policy CS5. Policy CS5 also clearly envisages that in order to deliver its policy objectives, the Council may have need of CPO powers to assemble the necessary land.

- 3.12 Core Strategy Policy CS9 – Flooding and water management. This policy seeks to direct development away from area at highest risk and will require significant forms of development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems as part of proposals. The scheme includes the delivery of new drainage systems incorporating sustainable urban drainage techniques as required by this policy, resulting in a betterment against existing flows. The Scheme is considered compliant with Policy CS9.
- 3.13 Core Strategy Policy CS10 – Housing Provision and distribution. The Council will make provision for at least 4,964 net additional dwellings in the Borough to 2027. Within Policy CS5, reference is made to the intention that, within the Sheerwater area, new homes will primarily be provided by bringing forward land in the Council's ownership for redevelopment, which includes the Order Land.
- 3.14 Core Strategy Policy CS11 – Housing Mix. This policy seeks to establish the delivery of a mixed supply of homes for a range of needs across the Borough of Woking. The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (carried out in 2009 and updated in 2015) identified a significant need across the Council's housing area for family sized open market and affordable housing. As explained in Section 6 above, the Scheme includes the delivery of a wide range of types of homes by tenure, unit size and for particular needs. This also includes a proportion of larger family sized homes.
- 3.15 Core Strategy Policy CS12 – Affordable Housing. The Council's overall target for affordable housing to 2027 is 35% of all new homes. On land within public ownership, the target is 50% of all new homes. However, the exact make up of any target is site specific, determined in accordance with the Council's Affordable Housing Delivery Supplementary Planning Document. Such delivery will also need to provide an appropriate tenure mix that meets the needs of local residents as well as significant provision of new affordable family homes. The majority of the Order Land is within public ownership and therefore, while the Scheme provides affordable housing at 46%, it is not considered fully compliant with Policy CS12, but is close to that elevated target. However, Policy CS12 does recognise that the proportion of affordable housing to be provided by a particular site will take into account a number of factors, including in the case of the Scheme, Policy CS5. Taking this into account, the Scheme is compliant with Policies CS5 and CS12.
- 3.16 Core Strategy Policy CS13 – Older people and vulnerable groups. The Council will support the development of specialist accommodation for older people and vulnerable groups in suitable locations. New specialist accommodation should be of high quality design, including generous space standards and amenity space. It should incorporate "lifetime homes" standards and be adaptable to the needs of those with disabilities and the elderly, with a percentage to be fully wheelchair accessible. The Scheme includes an Assisted Living Facility and has been designed to meet the needs of local residents in accordance with this policy.
- 3.17 Core Strategy Policy CS16 – Infrastructure Delivery. This policy sets out how the Council will seek to secure infrastructure to support new development. In order to secure a co-



ordinated and consistent approach to the collection of developer contributions, the Council has introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule. The Scheme attracts both a Community Infrastructure Levy Liability as well as Planning Obligations.

- 3.18 Core Strategy Policy CS17 – Open space, green infrastructure, sport and recreation, recognizes the importance of sports and recreation and the role it plays in the wellbeing of communities. New residential development will be required to contribute to the provision of open space and green infrastructure, including children’s play areas and outdoor sports facilities. Development involving the loss of open space will not be permitted except in limited circumstances, including where alternative facilities of equal or better quality will be provided as part of the development. The Scheme will enhance and improve the public realm, open space and leisure facilities within the Order Land and the Sheerwater area and the Scheme has been designed in compliance with this policy.
- 3.19 Core Strategy Policy CS18 – Transport and accessibility. The Council will support proposals that deliver improvements and increased accessibility to cycle, pedestrian and public transport networks. The existing highway network and access routes in and around the Order Land will be improved and enhanced as part of the Scheme. These include improvements to traffic calming measures and footways complying with current standards. In addition, cycle routes accessing the Basingstoke Canal towpath have been included to encourage car free access to the town centre and nearby railway.
- 3.20 Core Strategy Policy CS19 – Social and community infrastructure. The Council seeks to provide accessible and sustainable social and community infrastructure to support growth. The loss of existing facilities will be resisted unless there is no established need, or alternative provision can be made which have equal or greater accessibility for the community it serves. The provision of new community facilities will be encouraged where well served by public transport, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. The Scheme will deliver improved and enlarged community facilities, with enhanced pedestrian and cycle infrastructure as part of an overarching scheme to improve both the quality of and access to social and community infrastructure.
- 3.21 Core Strategy Policy CS21 – Design. The Council’s Core Strategy aims to create buildings and places that are attractive with their own distinct identity, respecting and contributing positively to the street scene and the character of the area. The design should be inclusive so as to be accessible to all members of the community and encourage sustainable means of travel. Development should incorporate landscaping to enhance the setting and provide appropriate levels of private and public amenity space. The Scheme has been designed to comply with this policy, incorporating all requirements and representing a wholesale improvement to the current conditions of the Order Land.
- 3.22 Core Strategy Policy CS22 – Sustainable construction. The Council requires new residential development to meet the energy and CO2 and water components of the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5 from 1 April 2016. New non-residential development of 1,000 square metres or more is required to comply with BREEAM “very good” standards. The residential units will be designed to maximise solar thermal opportunities.

*Note: Since the publication of the Core Strategy, a written Ministerial Statement was delivered to Parliament (25<sup>th</sup> March 2015) effectively repealing the Code for Sustainable Homes. Therefore, in applying Policy CS22, the Council has modified its approach. The Council considers that the Scheme is compliant with Policy CS22 (as now being applied).*

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The role of the Order Land is included within the area identified in the Council's adopted planning policy document, forming the Development Plan for the area. As noted above, Policy CS5 of the Woking Core Strategy seeks to intervene in the Priority Place area of Sheerwater to use land-use planning to address some of the issues identified in that area, most notably housing, promoting high quality design and the enhancement of open spaces and other public amenity areas. This policy states that the Council will take a proactive approach to implement a number of schemes which make a positive contribution towards addressing the challenges in the Priority Place areas.
- 4.2 The Schemes submitted as planning applications have been fully assessed by the Local Planning Authority and were considered to be in compliance with the provisions of the Development Plan and the NPPF, representing a sustainable form and high-quality form of development resulting in positive and significant benefits.