

THE EXECUTIVE

15 MARCH 2005

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS FOR SOUTH DAGENHAM (WEST)	FOR DECISION
<p>This report includes issues of a strategic nature which are reserved to the Executive for decision.</p> <p>Summary</p> <p>The Council has been engaged with the London Development Agency in developing the masterplan for South Dagenham. It has become apparent from work undertaken on the financial issues that the quality of the development will suffer due to the high costs of developing the site and low land values. To ensure that any development that does proceed is to the highest quality possible, the Council needs to clearly set out what it expects in terms of standards of development. By doing this the Council can signal its wishes to all the public sector agencies and private landowners involved in delivering Sustainable Communities in the Thames Gateway.</p> <p>This report sets out the general approach the Council will seek in relation to the re-development of the South Dagenham West site and the specific requirements arising from this approach. The Executive is asked to agree to promote the site as an exemplar of mixed use environmental development, incorporating within the master plan and any subsequent planning application, enhanced standards of environmental design, the comprehensive use of sustainable materials, renewables, and environmental management.</p> <p>The Council will negotiate higher environmental building standards for both the residential and commercial units, exceeding those set out in under Part L Building Regulations of the Sustainability and Security Act 2004. In addition, recognising that many of the potential improvements lie outside of the requirements of the current development standards and building regulations, it is proposed that housing on the South Dagenham site should exceed the ECOHomes Excellent rating.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The Executive is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree to promote the development of South Dagenham (west) as an environmental exemplar and to seek the environmental standards and requirements set out in Sections 3.1 – 3.3 of this report.2. Agree the specific development standards and requirements as set out in Section 4.1 of this report <p>Wards Affected River and Goresbrook</p>	

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 Masterplanning of the whole of the South Dagenham site, both east and west (Map 1), has since September 2002 been undertaken by the London Development Agency (LDA). Progress to date on the production of the masterplan has been slow, held up in part by the severe constraints of the sites in terms of the high cost of remediation and the provision of essential infrastructure. These high development costs and low land values are currently challenging the financial viability of any redevelopment. There are also a number of outstanding policy issues that have yet to be resolved in relation to the development of the sites, the most pressing being the level of potential retail expansion in the South Dagenham West area.

2.0 Issues

- 2.1 One of the key issues to emerge in the development of masterplan options relates to the physical form and design of the new residential developments and how the built form will contribute positively to creating balanced communities and achieving social cohesion. The principal concern is that because of the low land values and high development costs, any large scale residential development will only be built to the minimum space, design and environmental quality standards and the area could be blighted by the type of dormant and soulless housing development that has attracted widespread criticism elsewhere in London. It is essential therefore, given the constrained nature of the site, that any redevelopment contributes positively to the creation of a sense of identity and place, which in turn will underpin and ensure the future growth of the community.
- 2.2 In Nov 2004 Axa/Sun Life announced that they had reached agreement with the LDA to purchase their landholdings in South Dagenham West, known locally as the 45 Acres site. This purchase, which has now been completed has consolidated their landownership in the area, as they already have title to the Merrilands Retail Park. Axa/Sun Life have also announced the creation of a £400m Regeneration Fund and through the Mayor of London they have signalled their intention to develop the western site for up to 2000 new residential units and 120,000 sq.ft. of retail floorspace, supported with an outline planning application by February 2006.
- 2.3 In terms of phasing of any development, it is considered that the Western site, now in the majority ownership of AXA/Sun Alliance, could be developed first out of the two sites. This is because it is better served by public transport and does not require the level of infrastructure investment needed to unlock the development potential on the eastern site. It is realistic to conclude that the only likely development to take place in South Dagenham before 2011 would be up to 1000 units in around Chequers Corner/Merrilands Crescent, supported by a reconfigured retail offer. Also as the site lies within the planning jurisdiction of the

East London UDC it is crucial that the Council is able to influence the direction of the masterplan and the subsequent content of the planning application to be submitted by Axa/Sun Life on the Western site.

3.0 Proposed Approach

- 3.1 A key way to ensure that this negative scenario does not unfold is to make sure that any residential and retail development proposed on South Dagenham West is as distinctive and attractive as possible. Officers are proposing that the Executive agree that in any redevelopment of South Dagenham West the Council will seek a mixed use environmental housing and retail exemplar, incorporating within the masterplan and any subsequent planning application, enhanced standards of environmental design, the comprehensive use of sustainable materials, renewables, and environmental management. Environmental building standards for both the residential and commercial units should exceed those set out in under Part L Building Regulations of the Sustainability and Security Act 2004. Also, recognising that many of the potential improvements lie outside of the requirements of the current development standards and building regulations it is proposed that housing on the South Dagenham site should exceed the ECOHomes Excellent rating.
- 3.2 Officers have been approached by a number of potential development partners who have expressed interest in exploring the development of an environmental housing exemplar on the South Dagenham West site. These proposals have ranged from a Zero carbon Zero Waste proposal through to a more modest Eco-Village model. The reality of the high development costs associated with the site mean that it is highly unlikely that a pure Zero carbon option, as developed by Bioregional at BEDZED in Sutton, will be viable on this site. However, there are many zero and low cost options that could be accommodated into the design of the housing and retail proposals that could significantly improve its sustainable performance.
- 3.3 It is proposed that officers would in conjunction with existing landowners draft a set of sustainability standards that would underpin the development of the masterplan and inform the subsequent planning application. This would cover such issues as: primary energy consumption and renewables; embodied energy design and materials; water and waste management; sound proofing; sustainable design standards; accessible layouts; traffic management; ventilation and lighting; and biodiversity. This not a exhaustive list and there are further areas which officers would be seeking to develop for inclusion within the sustainability standards, such as Green Roofs and the development of car clubs as an alternative to private parking.
- 3.4 Officers recognised that achieving a high quality mixed use scheme on South Dagenham West which incorporates cutting edge environmental standards and management will require a change in mind set by developers, due to weighing up the increased costs against the environmental, PR and social benefits, as well as assisting in adding value to the current low land values. However, with the levels of public investment required to bring forward the sites in South Dagenham the Council should be insisting on the highest environmental standards. It is also recognised that the creation of a new high quality environmentally focused development will contribute significantly to the creation of a quality place, which

will make it more attractive to potential residents and businesses. It would also complement the other sustainable initiatives being promoted in the area such as Dagenham Dock Sustainable Industrial Park and the Environmental Technology Centre for London which are located a mile to the south of the Site.

4.0 Development Standards and Section 106 Requirements

4.1 The following development standards and Section 106 requirements will be sought in relation to any planning application submitted on the South Dagenham West site.

(1) Housing Mix

Housing Size	Percentage
1 Bed	26%
2 Bed	33%
3 Bed Flat/House	36%
4 Bed Flat/house	5%

(2) Affordable Housing

- 35% general + 15% GLA income based (Up to £45 pa) which are generally affordable within London.
- 50% Socially rented 50% Intermediate/Key worker

(3) RSL Provision

Agree that the Thames Gateway Alliance are engaged to work on this scheme and work with officers to optimise nomination rights for Borough residents.

(4) Public Transport and Parking Standards

- Agree to reduce parking standards provided that East London Transit to Dagenham Dock station is provided in advance of development and that an interchange is provided within Dagenham Dock Station.
- Support the additional costs of extending existing Bus services to Dagenham Dock station.

(5) Comprehensive Development

That developers actively engage with adjoining landowners to ensure a comprehensive plan is brought forward linking development beyond the site boundaries of the land owned by Axa/Sun Life for example the adjacent Goresbrook Parade.

(6) Chequers Corner

The Council will require the immediate demolition of the Chequers Corner site and its inclusion in the first phase of any redevelopment programme for South Dagenham West.

- (7) New Educational Provision
The provision of a 3 form entry Primary and Nursery School and a financial contribution to support the establishment of a new secondary school to meet provision arising from the development.
- (8) Public Realm
A financial contribution towards the implementation of the Heathway – Dagenham Dock Public Realm improvement programme.
- (9) Local Labour Scheme
Enter into an Agreement to implement the Local Labour Scheme as set out in the Local Labour Advice Note, covering construction training and end uses.
- (10) General
A financial contribution towards open space, public transport improvements, the new Dagenham Library, public art and the Goresbrook medical centre.
- (11) Management
Consideration of the establishment of a Community Development and Environmental Trust to maintain the public realm and possibly the management of any flatted development, community facility and the provision of community support. This could include the provision of dedicated community development worker and possibly a contribution towards Street Wardens.
- (12) Restriction on the sale of Private Sector Housing
Agree to restrictions on the amount of private sector housing sold to investors to restrict the amount of private sector rented.
- (13) Phasing
Not to build or open any new retail developments that may be agreed until the new Dagenham Library is built and opened and new retail investment has started in Barking Town Centre.

5.0 Complementary Development in Dagenham

- 5.1 The development of South Dagenham West also needs to be seen in the context and the phasing of proposed development in the wider Dagenham area, which will inform and be informed by its development.
- 5.2 The first of these is the proposed redevelopment of 1-11 Goresbrook Road and 1-9 Chequers Parade. Currently an Urban Design and Financial Feasibility report is being prepared for this site. The preliminary findings of this report support a complete redevelopment of this strategic corner site for approximately 62 residential units and a medical centre. Further work is being undertaken on assessing the scope for the new medical facility to part meet the medical needs arising from the redevelopment of South Dagenham West site.

- 5.3 The Second development is the proposal for a new Library and Customer First Centre in the Heathway. Again, the Council have commissioned an Urban Design and Financial Feasibility report into this proposal as part of a wider regeneration strategy being prepared for the Heathway. Preliminary findings from the financial assessment are indicating that a mixed use scheme including housing could deliver a state of the art Library and Customer First Centre as part of the development. This facility is seen as being critical in underpinning the regeneration of the Heathway and would provide a key social infrastructure facility for the new residents of South Dagenham West.
- 5.4 Both these schemes were considered by the Executive on 8 March 2005.
- 6.0 **Financial Implications**
- 6.1 There are no direct financial issues arising from this report.