

**Date:** 11 March 2024

**Item:** Chief Executive's Report

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## **This paper will be considered in public**

### **1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides a review of major issues and developments since the previous meeting of the Committee.

### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to note the report.**

### **3 Introduction**

- 3.1 The last three months have continued the great progress in the development of Places for London. As part of the pack for this meeting, we have published our new Business Plan which sets out the investment we are making across the capital to deliver the homes, jobs and infrastructure that this city urgently needs.
- 3.2 We also mark the milestone of having completed 1,000 homes by the end of March 2024. This includes projects identified as part of the Mayor's Small Sites Small Builders programme such as the London Mews, Finchley developed by Kuropatwa and designed by Peter Barber, which delivered 97 homes (51 per cent affordable). It also includes Blackhorse View, our largest completed development to date in Waltham Forest. All 350 homes (50 per cent affordable) at Blackhorse View are now sold.
- 3.3 As well as the 1,060 homes that will have been completed by the end of March, we have a further 3,296 homes under construction. This leaves us well placed to hit the target of starting on 20,000 homes within our first ten years, especially given the progress on the West London Partnership (described below) and the fact that later this year we will be submitting planning applications for a total of 7,500 homes at Earl's Court and Edgware.
- 3.4 Notwithstanding the continued challenging economic environment, the financial performance of Places for London remains very positive with gross property income £5.4m (8.5 per cent) favourable to budget. Net property income is £10.0m (20.7 per cent) favourable to budget. We are confident of exceeding our annual target for net operating surplus, which would result in us delivering a higher dividend to TfL than anticipated.

## 4 Health and Safety

- 4.1 I am pleased to report that again there have been no serious injuries in the year to date.
- 4.2 We have selected 25 April 2024 for our inaugural Standdown for Safety and Health and Wellbeing in Places for London. We are planning a full programme of events for the day, with internal speakers, external key-note speakers, workshops, panels and stalls with discussion areas, health and wellbeing checks, and training opportunities throughout the day. The Standdown will provide an opportunity for everyone at Places for London to be involved.
- 4.3 Given the importance of safety, health and wellbeing, all Places for London colleagues are being asked to cancel any planned meetings for the day. The Executive team and I will be attending all sessions. The focus of this day will bring our Safety and Health strategy to life and also recognise that the following Sunday is the United Nations' World Day for Safety and Health at Work.

## 5 Housing

### Woodside Park

- 5.1 Places for London's development at Woodside Park has reached practical completion, transforming what had been an unattractive and underutilised brownfield site next to the northbound Northern line platform, before and after images of which are below.



- 5.2 The site was developed by Pocket Living and comprises 86 affordable one-bedroom homes for local first-time buyers. There are two five-storey buildings, each of which has a rooftop garden.
- 5.3 The complex site required a new retaining wall built next to the platform and the relocation of extensive operational cabling. As on all Places for London sites, there was a strong focus on construction skills, which here led to opportunities for six apprentices, six work experience placements, and placements for five unemployed Barnet residents.

- 5.4 With the completion of Woodside Park and the impending completion of the first phase of Kidbrooke, we will have reached the important milestone of having completed over 1,000 homes on land owned by TfL by the end of March 2024.

### **Limmo Peninsula and East London Partnership**

- 5.5 On 31 January 2024, we launched the search for a new development partner in east London. The partnership will deliver homes at the Limmo Peninsula site in Newham with the potential for other sites to be added in the future across east London.
- 5.6 The Limmo Peninsula site covers 12.3 acres of land, with 600 metres of river frontage. Previously used as a work site for the Elizabeth line, the area now has the potential to deliver up to 1,500 new homes, including affordable housing, alongside a range of improvements for the local community as well as new residents.
- 5.7 The site could potentially include commercial space which would support the local economy, large areas of publicly accessible open space, and enhancements to the connectivity of the area, including as a new cycle and pedestrian bridge and a new river walkway.
- 5.8 Sustainability will feature at the heart of any future designs, with the scheme expected to be effectively car-free (though with some Blue Badge parking spaces). Future residents would be encouraged to travel sustainably, given that the north part of the site is less than five minutes' walk from Canning Town station, with customers able to access both the Jubilee line and DLR, as well as Canning Town bus station.

### **West London Partnership**

- 5.9 Our decision to offer the successful bidder for Limmo Peninsula the opportunity to potentially develop sites across east London builds on the success of our West London Partnership with Barratt London. The West London Partnership was launched through procurement for a partner to develop up to 900 homes at Bollo Lane, near Acton Town station in Ealing.
- 5.10 The West London Partnership is progressing well. Our team has worked with Barratt London to identify 10 sites to bring forward over the next 10 years. These sites have the potential to unlocking over 60 acres of land, delivering 4,000 homes and 285,000 sq ft of commercial space. Through the partnership some 9,600 jobs will be created. Critically, we expect the partnership to be investing over £100m in improving the local transport network alongside these developments, in addition to the profit that will be reinvested in the wider network.

## **6 Planning**

### **South Kensington**

- 6.1 On 12 December 2023, it was confirmed that Places for London and our joint venture partner, Native Land, had won our appeal for development plans at South Kensington. The appeal followed the decision made by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's (RBKC's) planning committee to refuse the planning application in December 2021.
- 6.2 RBKC's refusal went against its planning officer's recommendation, and despite our plans receiving nearly 700 letters of support. Letters of support came from across the community, including from a range of important local organisations and institutions, such as the Natural History Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Science Museum and Imperial College.
- 6.3 The Planning Inspector ruled that Native Land and Places for London's appeal against the refusal should be allowed, acknowledging that the scheme will provide a range of important benefits. The now-consented proposals include 50 homes around the station (including 35 per cent on-site affordable housing) and provide much-needed step-free access from street level to the ticket hall as well as completing the delivery of step-free access to trains on the Circle and District line platforms.
- 6.4 Designed by Stirling Prize-winning architect RSHP, the proposals were carefully considered to respect the unique and important heritage of the area, with historic building specialist Julian Harrap Architects working on the heritage elements of the scheme.
- 6.5 South Kensington station is one of London's busiest stations. Plans to develop the station have been brought forward since the mid-1960s. The success here reflects the great work led by the joint Places for London and Native Land team. This is one of the most important developments to be undertaken by Places for London and presents a unique opportunity to create a station that reflects this globally significant museum and cultural quarter.

### **The Liberty of Southwark**

- 6.6 On 31 January 2024, Places for London and its joint venture partner, Landsec, secured planning consent from the Southwark Council Planning Committee for The Liberty of Southwark, an office-led development in London's Bankside.
- 6.7 The planning consent is for amendments to plans first approved in 2021. The plans were amended to ensure the Roman mausoleum and mosaics found on the site in the last two years could be respectfully uncovered and embedded into the future place. The amendments also address updated building regulations, including the integration of a second staircase and lift lobby.
- 6.8 The Liberty of Southwark will provide a new 190,000 sq ft net zero office building, including affordable workspace. We and Landsec are targeting the

highest level of sustainability and wellness credentials, including BREEAM Outstanding and WELL Platinum. The revised plans include a cycle hub to support people living and working in the Bankside area.

- 6.9 At the heart of this new place will be a community hub housing some of the rare Roman finds unearthed at The Liberty of Southwark site, including the most intact Roman mausoleum ever discovered in Britain. The space will be accessible to the public, including schools, community groups and tourists.
- 6.10 The plans will restore a heritage building, 15 Southwark Street, to its original use with retail on the ground floor and commercial workspace above. The approved plans also deliver 34 new homes, 50 per cent of which will be affordable housing.

### **National Policy**

- 6.11 We have previously referenced the delay to our programme caused by lack of clarity over emerging second staircase regulation. On 13 February 2024, the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, wrote to all Members of Parliament on his long-term plan for housing.
- 6.12 In the letter, the Secretary of State announced that the Building Safety Regulator will publish detailed guidance to support a second staircase by the end of March 2024, and this guidance will set out that the second staircase will not come with additional provisions such as evacuation lifts. This provides us and the wider industry the clarity that we have been seeking. We and our partners will now look to take forward our schemes, acknowledging that redesign and new planning consents will be required before construction can proceed.
- 6.13 The same letter sets out a proposal to introduce a new 'brownfield presumption' in the twenty most populous cities and urban centres in the UK, including London. The Secretary of State sets out that this new presumption will make it easier to get permission to build on brownfield land where an authority is underdelivering, by raising the bar for refusing applications. The Secretary of State also proposes a change to national planning policy that would require councils to give significant weight to the benefits of delivering as many homes as possible where there is a shortage of land for homes, telling councils that they need to be pragmatic in applying policies on the internal layout of developments. A consultation on these two proposals has launched and will close on 26 March 2024.

## **7 Education and Skills**

- 7.1 On 15 February 2024, we announced that, following a competitive process, we had selected Construction Youth Trust as our Educational Engagement Programme delivery partner.
- 7.2 The programme is a collaboration between Places for London and our partners, including Barratt London, The Earls Court Development Company,

Grainger plc and Helical plc. The programme aims to inspire the next generation of young people into the built environment sector, which encompasses both the construction and real estate sectors.

- 7.3 We are keen to use the scale and longevity of our programme to encourage new people into the industry. This is vital because research by the Construction Industry Training Board has shown that an additional 22,800 workers are expected to be required to meet construction demand in Greater London by 2027.
- 7.4 The programme will bring together schools, young people and employers, so that students, teachers and parents can learn more about the industry and the impact it has. Over the next three years, we and Construction Youth Trust aim to reach 6,750 young Londoners through a range of workshops and intensive programmes to support young people progress into built environment careers.
- 7.5 Through the partnership, we and our partners will be directly supporting 250 young people to progress into an education, training or employment outcomes related to the built environment including, for example, apprenticeships and T-Levels.
- 7.6 The collaboration with Construction Youth Trust builds on our existing activity to encourage young people into the sector, which has seen us working with 11 schools, engaging with more than 3,500 young people, and providing 84 work experience placements.

### **Construction Skills**

- 7.7 Our newest Skills Centre will open shortly on Station Road in Edgware, providing a base for local people seeking to embark on a range of rewarding and varied careers in construction and the built environment. The Skills Centre has been funded and delivered by a combination of Places for London, Ballymore, and The Skills Centre (an employer-led, community-focused training and apprenticeships provider).
- 7.8 The new centre will be a focal point for growing local skills and talent, offering a diverse range of training opportunities, including classroom qualifications and hands-on skills training. Training will be open to anyone interested in a career in construction and the built environment, whether as part of a first step into the sector or to help progress a career. As the proposed Edgware town centre development progresses in the future, the centre will support an ever-increasing range of exciting career options, with hundreds of local people benefitting from training and job opportunities.
- 7.9 Ahead of its official opening, the centre is already making a difference, with the fit-out of the unit presenting an opportunity for local residents and students to gain important new skills and develop hands-on experience.

- 7.10 The centre has been set up to look to the future of Edgware as we and Ballymore prepare to submit our outline planning application for the comprehensive regeneration of The Broadwalk Centre site and neighbouring land. The plans would see £1.7 billion invested in Edgware, adding £80m Gross Value Added to the local economy and creating more than 1,400 full-time jobs.
- 7.11 The masterplan for the site proposes to deliver 3,365 new homes, including up to 1,150 affordable homes, and 463 student accommodation spaces. A significant increase in green space for the town centre includes a new Deans Brook Nature Park, which is to be created by unlocking land which has been inaccessible to the public for almost 100 years.
- 7.12 In advance of the proposed development coming forward, the Edgware Skills Centre will be key to providing the next generation of workers with vital skills, particularly across the built environment and sustainability sectors.
- 7.13 The new Skills Centre at Edgware will build on Places for London's existing range of programmes that have led to more than 5,300 people receiving training since 2020, with more than 2,100 of those having progressed into employment.

## **8 Resourcing**

- 8.1 There is a huge amount of activity underway across the teams in Places for London. Recruitment and resourcing therefore remains a key focus. The most important role to fill in the short term is Head of Retail. Our £600m retail estate is central to our ability to grow income and deliver inclusive growth in stations and on high streets across London. We have been delighted with the quality of candidates who applied, and interviews are underway. We hope to make an appointment shortly.
- 8.2 We have previously updated the Committee on our Operating Model Review. We have issued an Invitation to Tender to the 19 organisations who expressed an interest in being our delivery partner. We expect the Operating Model Review to take 20 weeks, beginning in early April. As stated previously, the operating model work will be carried out in close collaboration with TfL and Greater London Authority colleagues and be governed by the central Our TfL Programme. We have also invited the Senior Advisors to join the Executive sessions on Operating Model Review, so that we can leverage their significant experience in this area.

**List of appendices to this report:** None

**List of Background Papers:** None

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