

# 4-8 Sedgemere Road

In the London Borough of Bexley

Planning Application reference: 24/02488/FULM

## Planning Application

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007 and Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008.

## The proposal

Demolition of the existing commercial buildings and development of a part 7/part 25-storey building comprising of 228 residential units (Use Class C3), with associated ancillary amenities and provision of a basement and ground floor non-residential floorspace (Use Class E(a), E(b), E(c), E(c)i, E(c)ii, E(c)iii, E(e), E(g)i, E(g)ii, and F2(b)), boundary treatments, soft and hard landscaping, public realm enhancements, highway works, and infrastructure for cycle and car parking, as well as other associated works.

## The applicant

The applicant is **Abbey Wood Sedgemere Limited** and the architect is **GRID**.

## Recommendation

The Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service, acting as Local Planning Authority for the purpose of determining this application;

- i. grants conditional planning permission in respect of application 24/02488/FULM for the reasons set out in the approval section below, and subject to the prior completion of a section 106 legal agreement;
- ii. delegates authority to the Head of Development Management to issue the planning permission and attach, add, delete or vary, the final detailed wording of the conditions and informatives as required with any material changes being referred back to the Deputy Mayor, and authority to negotiate, agree the final wording, and sign and execute, and complete the section 106 legal agreement;
- iii. delegates authority to the Head of Development Management to agree any variations to the proposed heads of terms for the section 106 legal agreement;
- iv. delegates authority to the Head of Development Management to refer the application back to the Deputy Mayor, if by 28 November 2025 the section 106 legal agreement has not been completed;
- v. notes that approval of details pursuant to conditions imposed on the planning permission will be submitted to, and determined by Bexley Council; and
- vi. notes that Bexley Council will be responsible for the enforcement of the conditions attached to the permission.

## Introduction

1. Having assumed authority to determine this planning application, this report sets out the matters that the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service must consider in determining whether to grant or refuse planning permission and to guide his decision making at the upcoming representation hearing. This report includes a recommendation from GLA officers, as set out below.

## Officer recommendation - reasons for approval

2. The Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration, and the Fire Service, acting as the local planning authority, has considered the particular circumstances of this application against national, strategic and local planning policy, relevant supplementary planning guidance and all material planning considerations. He has also had regard to Bexley Council's Planning Officer report dated 20 May 2025, the draft decision notice prepared by Bexley Council setting out the reason for refusal and all consultation responses and representations made on the case both to Bexley Council and the GLA. The below reasons set out why this application is considered to be acceptable in planning terms:
  - The proposed development would deliver new homes and affordable homes, along with non-residential town centre floorspace, public realm and landscape improvements within a highly accessible location and underutilised brownfield site in proximity to Abbey Wood Station, designated as a Sustainable Development Location and Abbey Wood Village Local Town Centre as defined by the Bexley Local Plan and the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area. The proposal would make a positive contribution towards achieving relevant housing targets and London's housing need in alignment with the NPPF and London Plan policy objectives and Bexley Local Plan land use and housing policies relating to housing and town centre intensification.
  - Partial conflicts are identified to London Plan policy D9(B) and Local Plan policy DP12 concerning tall building locational criteria. The proposed development is in close proximity to, and would be perceived as part of, the existing and emerging cluster of taller development in Abbey Wood and other emerging development. The development would respond and positively contribute to the surrounding context and character, with acceptable tall building visual, functional and environmental impacts assessed. The development itself would be of a high quality design and other than the locational policy conflicts identified above, the development is assessed to be in accordance with the design policies contained within Chapter 3 of the London Plan and Local Plan policies SP5, DP11 and DP12.
  - The proposed development is assessed to result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the setting and significance of Lesnes Abbey, Scheduled Monument and Ruins of Lesnes Abbey, listed Grade II. As

such, the development would not be in accordance with London Plan policy HC1 and policies SP6 and DP14 of Bexley's Local Plan. Officers attach great weight to the harm identified having regard to the national significance of Lesnes Abbey. The NPPF balancing exercise is also triggered in this case and the public benefits delivered by the scheme. The public benefits, which include the provision of new homes within the highly accessible location, 35% of which would be affordable when measured by habitable room, along with wider benefits associated with the delivery of town centre uses and improvements to the public realm are considered to outweigh the less than substantial heritage harm. The development proposals have improved over the course of the application to deliver a package of public benefits that would clearly and convincingly outweigh the identified heritage harm. The proposed development accords with paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

- The drainage strategy for the proposed development would maximise on site sustainable drainage and attenuation measures, although proposes to discharge surface water into a Thames Water foul sewer under Harrow Manorway. The proposal to discharge to the foul network conflicts with Bexley Local Plan policy DP33 and constitutes a departure from the drainage hierarchy contained within London Plan policy SI13 and non-statutory National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems. In this case it is not considered that alternative discharge options or locations are practicable, when also considering identified capacity issues locally with surface water drainage networks. The complete removal of surface water from the foul network in line with wider strategies is not considered achievable in the current circumstances. The principles of the drainage strategy to reduce overall site flows from the existing site condition aligns with aims to attenuate runoff and is not considered to give rise to an increased sewer flood risk. The development is assessed to comply with London Plan policy SI12 and Local Plan policy DP32 relating to flood risk management. Having considered the circumstances above, the drainage strategy is considered acceptable when balanced against the delivery a significant number of new homes within the highly accessible location to meet wider growth policy aspirations.
- Overall, and notwithstanding some elements of policy conflict identified above, the proposed development is considered to accord with the development plan, read as a whole, and there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to justify the refusal of permission.

## **S106 legal agreement**

3. The following heads of terms have been agreed as a basis for the planning obligations to be contained within the section 106 legal agreement:

### Affordable housing

- Provision of a minimum of 35% of the residential units as affordable housing (by habitable room) comprising 51% at London Living Rent and 49% at Discounted Market Rent by habitable room.

- A marketing scheme for the Discounted Market Rent Housing Units and the London Living Rent Level Housing Units to be submitted to the Council.
- Early-stage viability review.
- A BTR Management Plan (a plan for the management of the Market Housing Units and the Affordable Housing Units) submitted to the Council.
- Build to Rent covenant period during which time clawback disposals are subject to a clawback.

#### Highways and transport

- A contribution of £45,000 to support active travel improvements within the vicinity of the development.
- A contribution of £15,000 towards a controlled parking zone review by the Council of the impact of the Development and whether alterations to existing parking controls needs to be introduced.
- A Travel Plan Monitoring Contribution of £2,000 to monitor the implementation of and compliance with the Travel Plan.
- A Wayfinding Contribution of £12,000 for the provision of new signage or refreshing of existing signage to further establish walking and cycling routes.
- Highway works obligations, including schedule of condition, specification and programme and to enter a highway deed with the Highway Authority and obtain all required licences and consents.
- To waive all rights and entitlement to a Parking Permit (other than a Blue Badge Holder) in the Controlled Parking Zones, and to agree that all marketing material will make it clear the Development is a car-free Development.
- A Travel Plan to be submitted to the Council, giving objectives aimed at reducing car use and promoting public transport information, and appointing a Travel Plan Monitoring Officer to monitor the plan's effectiveness (to be reviewed annually for 5 years after occupation).

#### Off-site play space

- An offsite play space contribution of £171,522 to expand the capacity of children's play space in the vicinity of the Development.

#### Energy and sustainability

- A Carbon Offsetting Contribution payable in two instalments based on the estimated shortfall in meeting the target of net zero carbon emissions from the Development. The First Instalment (£137,797.5) which is 50% of the Carbon Offsetting Contribution Estimate (£275,595)

- To submit to the Council for its written approval an update to the Energy Statement which includes the Carbon Offsetting Contribution Calculation. The Carbon Offsetting Contribution (Second Instalment) is payable following written approval by the Council.
- 'Be Seen' energy monitoring obligations.
- Ability to connect to a District Heating Network for a period of 30 years, obligations to enter into a Service Level Agreement with an energy service company.

#### Employment, skills and job opportunities

- Local employment, training and skills obligations covering the construction period, offering employment opportunities to local residents.
- To maintain a register of employment apprenticeships and vacancies created in connection with the construction of the Development.
- To meet at least quarterly with the Economic Development and Skills Team to show the progress made with delivering in the Employment and Skills Plan.

#### Public realm, public route and landscaping

- A Public Realm Works Specification to be submitted to the Council for approval.
- To complete the pedestrian route from the pedestrian crossing on Harrow Manorway through the Development to Sedgemere Road in accordance with the Council approved specification.
- To submit a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to the Council for approval.
- To submit a Management and Maintenance Plan to the Council for approval.
- To operate, manage and maintain the landscape area, the public realm works and the public route in accordance with Council approved plans for the lifetime of the Development.

#### Other

- S106 monitoring obligations and contribution.

### **Conditions to be secured**

4. Refer to Appendix 1 of this report.

## Site description and surrounding area

5. The approximately 0.27-hectare site relates to the parcel of land at 4-8 Sedgemere Road, located within Abbey Wood Village Local Town Centre and Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area in the London Borough of Bexley. The application site is situated between the A2041 Harrow Manorway to the west and Sedgemere Road to the east (Figure 1). The site currently accommodates lower-scale commercial uses including a car repair garage, ancillary structures and storage and is therefore classified as a non-designated industrial site.



**Figure 1. Location Plan with the application site outlined in red.**

6. Harrow Manorway forms the boundary with the London Borough of Greenwich and is characterised by higher density development to the west, which comprises constructed buildings of up to 21-storeys in height, along with a Sainsbury's supermarket and car park to the west of the application site. A BP service station is located to the north of the site and to the south, a former car park site which is identified for redevelopment (Site Allocation ABW01 Felixstowe Road Car Park) along with vegetation and residential buildings. The neighbourhood directly east of the site comprises lower density residential development, predominantly containing dwellings of 1-2 storeys in height.
7. To the north of Overton Road is land covered by Peabody's outline Lesnes Estate masterplan redevelopment (LPA ref: 21/01948/OUTEA, GLA ref: 2021/0853/S2) which received resolution to grant in October 2022 for up to 1,950 residential units and 3,225 sqm (GIA) of commercial floorspace. On 16

June 2025, the Mayor resolved that he was content to allow the local planning authority to determine the case itself, subject to any action that the Secretary of State may take. The site is allocated in the Bexley's Local Plan for primarily residential development through estate regeneration (ABW02 Lesnes Estate/Coralline Walk).

8. The site lies within a Sustainable Development Location within Bexley's Local Plan. Abbey Wood is also one of the areas identified for growth in the Local Plan and Bexley's Growth Strategy, which promote higher density mixed use redevelopment within accessible locations. The site also falls within a Suitable Location for Tall Buildings within the Local Plan – Thamesmead and Abbey Wood, identified for tall buildings that should not normally exceed 45 metres in height. The site is located within Flood Zone 3, in an area benefitting from flood defences, and a Critical Drainage Area. The site is not within a conservation area and does not contain any designated or non-designated heritage assets. The site lies within the wider setting of Lesnes Abbey ruins to the southeast, a Scheduled Ancient Monument which is also listed at Grade II. Lesnes Abbey Wood is an ancient woodland, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and contains the Abbey Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
9. The site is located within 150 metres of Abbey Wood Station which provides access to Elizabeth Line and National Rail services. There are also bus stops within reasonable walking distance of the site providing access to several routes. The site records a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 5 on a scale of 0-6b where 6b represents the highest level of public transport accessibility. The site is also adjacent to the proposed route for the Thamesmead/Abbey Wood Bus Rapid Transit. The nearest part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) is the A205, approximately 4 km from the site.

## **Details of the proposal**

10. Full planning permission is sought for the residential-led redevelopment of the site involving the demolition of the existing commercial buildings and the construction of a part 7, part 25 storey building with an additional basement level and external roof plant (with an additional mezzanine level if measured from the lower Sedgemere Road frontage).
11. The development would comprise 228 purpose built rental residential units (Use Class C3) following the Build to Rent model, including 35% affordable housing by habitable room which would be provided through combination of London Living Rent (LLR) and Discounted Market Rent (DMR) homes. In addition, the development would provide approximately 370 sq.m. (GIA) of non-residential floorspace allowing for flexible commercial and community use at ground floor (Use Classes E, and F2(b)), together with ancillary amenities, cycle storage, car parking, boundary treatments, landscaping, and public realm enhancements.
12. The taller 25 storey element (approximately 85 metres AOD) is located on the southern portion of the site, stepping down to 7 storeys (approx. 26 metres

AOD) towards the northern boundary. Residential accommodation is provided from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor to 25<sup>th</sup> floor with communal residential amenity space distributed between the mezzanine and first floor level with a further external terrace provided at the 7<sup>th</sup> floor. At ground level, non-residential floorspace and the residential entrance lobby is concentrated towards Harrow Manorway providing an active frontage. Cycle storage, refuse and further ancillary spaces are accommodated along the Sedgemere Road frontage and at basement and mezzanine levels.

13. Public realm and landscaping improvements are proposed along all frontages. A new pedestrian route will also be introduced through the site connecting Harrow Manorway and Sedgemere Road. Vehicular access, car parking and a servicing loading bay is provided off Sedgemere Road. Car parking is limited to seven Blue Badge spaces located at ground level.

### Amendments to proposal

14. Following application submission and prior to the Council's determination of the application, several amendments were made to the scheme which include:
  - Affordable housing – the affordable housing offer was increased from 20.1% to 35% by habitable room, comprising 30% London Living Rent and 70% Discounted Market Rent units. The proposed discounts were also revised to meet the Mayor's definition of genuinely affordable housing;
  - Commercial floorspace – the flexible commercial and community floorspace at ground level was increased from circa 132 sq.m. to 370 sq.m;
  - Building design – several design alterations were incorporated to provide additional active frontage at ground level; changes at ground mezzanine, first floor and basement level, primarily relating to amenity provision and cycle storage; along with a series of associated minor alterations to elevations at the lower levels; and
  - Further revised and updated technical documentation was submitted.

### Stage 3

15. Following the Mayor's decision to call in the application, GLA officers have engaged with the applicant in a series of discussions on the scheme. The applicant has submitted additional documentation in support of the proposed development which included the following changes:
  - Revision to the affordable housing tenure split to include an increased proportion of London Living Rent units, rising from 30% to 51% of the affordable accommodation by habitable room.
  - Revision to the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, which proposes to discharge surface water into the sewer within Harrow Manorway.

- An additional landscape setback has been incorporated to the north-west of the site to deliver increased footway width on Harrow Manorway. Further landscaping details are proposed to be secured through condition and this change is not expected to result in any significant changes to urban greening factor or biodiversity net gain calculations. The proposal would continue to meet relevant policy targets and statutory requirements.
  - Further revised and updated technical documentation was submitted.
16. GLA officers reconsulted the Local Lead Flood Authority (LB Bexley), Thames Water and the Environment Agency in relation to the revised Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy. London City Airport was also consulted generally.
  17. Given the nature of the revised documentation and that no significant amendments were sought impacting other consultees or neighbouring properties, further re-consultation was not considered to be necessary.

## **Relevant planning history and current planning application**

### Relevant planning history

18. Local Planning Authority reference: 24/02386/SCREEN - Request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the Regulations 2017) for: the proposed development of up to 230 new homes (Building heights up to 25 storeys, 85.6m AOD) with associated parking and landscaping. Observation Sent (Not EIA development).
19. Local Planning Authority reference: 24/00247/SCREEN - Request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for: the proposed development of up to 200 new homes (Building heights up to 21 storeys, 73.2m AOD) with associated parking and landscaping. Observation Sent (Not EIA development).
20. Local Planning Authority reference: 16/01275/OUTM - Outline application for demolition of existing buildings and hardstanding, residential development of up to 219 units and up to 3225 sq.m. of commercial floorspace (with flexible uses across classes A1 A4 (retail, financial and professional services, cafe and restaurants) and B1a (office) and D1 (community uses) and associated works including informal and formal open space; internal road network; landscaping; car and cycle parking and waste storage. The application was granted consent on 22.12.2016.
21. It is noted that the masterplan consent 16/01275/OUTM, which lapsed in December 2024, covered the application site and land to the north and south parallel to Harrow Manorway. This application by Peabody in 2016 covered one of the four applications for parcels of land which received approval, although the applications were subject to one S106 agreement (GLA ref: 2016/3717/S2).

Approved parameter plans allowed for maximum building heights of 51.4 metres on the application site and 58 metres at the Felixstowe Car Park site to the south (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Extract from the Building Height Parameter Plan, approved as part of lapsed permission 16/01275/OUTM.**

### Subject application

22. The application scheme was subject to pre-application discussions with GLA officers as well as Council officers.

### **Stage 1**

23. On 25 October 2024, the Mayor of London received documents from Bexley Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. This was referred to the Mayor under the following categories of the Schedule to the Order 2008:

- **Category 1A:** “Development which comprises or includes the provision of more than 150 houses, flats, or houses and flats”;
- **Category 1B:** “Development (other than development which only comprises the provision of houses, flats, or houses and flats) which comprises or includes the erection of a building or buildings (c) outside Central London and with a total floorspace of more than 15,000 square metres”; and

- **Category 1C:** “Development which comprises or includes the erection of a building of one or more of the following descriptions (c) the building is more than 30 metres high and is outside the City of London.”

24. On 9 December 2024, the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service, acting under delegated authority, considered planning report GLA/2024/0571/S1 (link to report [here](#)<sup>1</sup>) and subsequently advised Bexley Council:

- **Land use principles:** The residential-led development with some flexible commercial floorspace meets with the objectives of the opportunity area, site allocation and town centre location.
- **Housing:** The quantum of new homes will help achieve the targets for both the opportunity area and Bexley. The layout and quality of the proposed accommodation raises no strategic concern. The proposed affordable housing offer is 20.1% (HB/R) and does not meet with fast-track requirements. The Financial Viability Assessment is currently being reviewed by the GLA’s Viability team.
- **Urban design:** The architectural and design approach is supported. The proposed building exceeds the maximum building height identified by Council, as such the acceptability of the building height will be considered against the proposed mitigation measures and public benefits that the scheme will delivered. How the scheme achieves this will be determined at Stage 2.
- **Transport:** To ensure compliance with London Plan policy, some clarification and further work is required on cycle parking numbers and design, footway design adjacent to the pedestrian crossing and a contribution to Healthy Streets proposals to resolve a number of transport issues.
- Other issues on **environmental matters** and **sustainability** also required resolution prior to the Mayor’s decision making stage.

### Council resolution

25. On the 20 May 2025, Bexley Council Planning Officers, acting under delegated authority, resolved to refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposed development, due to its height of 25 storeys (85 metres AOD), would significantly exceed the 45-metre maximum building height threshold set out in Policy DP12 of the Bexley Local Plan. In the absence of a plan-led justification, the proposed height would be out of keeping with the prevailing scale and character of the surrounding built environment. The resultant form would appear unduly prominent and visually discordant on a relatively open skyline, thereby failing to contribute positively to the legibility, character, or coherence of the local townscape. As such, the proposal fails to comply with Policies DP12, SP5, and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan, Policy D9 of the London Plan,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://planapps.london.gov.uk/planningapps/24-02488-FULM>

and paragraph 139 of the NPPF (2024), which states that development that is not well designed should be refused, particularly where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, including relevant local design guidance and supplementary planning documents.

- 2) The proposed height of the development would result in less than substantial harm to the setting and significance of Lesnes Abbey, a Scheduled Monument and Grade II listed building. The harm to the heritage asset is not outweighed by the public benefits presented. The proposal therefore fails to satisfy the requirements of Paragraphs 213-215 of the NPPF (2024) and is contrary to Policy HC1 of the London Plan, Policies SP6 and DP14 of the Bexley Local Plan and Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 3) The proposal seeks to discharge surface water to a system with confirmed capacity constraints and fails to adequately demonstrate how surface water would be managed to prevent an increase in flood risk. In the absence of sufficient evidence to show that the development would not exacerbate existing drainage issues, the proposal fails to accord with the flood risk and sustainable drainage principles set out in paragraphs 170 and 171 of the NPPF, which require development to avoid flood risk and ensure it is not increased elsewhere. The proposal is also contrary to Policy SI 13 of the London Plan and Policies DP12, DP32 and DP33 of the Bexley Local Plan, which require new development to incorporate effective surface water management measures and demonstrate that flood risk will not be increased on-site or off-site.
- 4) In the absence of a legal agreement securing the necessary planning obligations, including Affordable Housing provision within Build to Rent, Highways and Transport improvements, Healthcare contributions, Energy and Sustainability measures, Training and Skills provision, Off-site Play contributions, and the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) the proposed development fails to adequately mitigate its impact on local services, infrastructure, and amenities. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies DF1, E11, G6, H11, S4, S9, SI 2, T9 of the London Plan (2021), Policies SP3, SP7, SP10 and DP30 of the Bexley Plan, Paragraph 58 of the NPPF (2024), requiring developments to address the impacts of the development through planning obligations.

## Stage 2

26. On 20 May 2025, Bexley Council advised the Mayor of this decision. On 2 June 2025, the Mayor considered planning report GLA2024/0720/S2 (link to report [here](#)<sup>2</sup>) and determined that he will act as the local planning authority for the purposes of determining the planning application for the following reasons:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://planapps.london.gov.uk/planningapps/24-02488-FULM>

- a) Pursuant to Statutory test 7(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London Order) 2008 (“the Order” herein), the development would have a significant impact on the implementation of the London Plan as detailed below and in the attached Stage 2 Report; and
  - b) Pursuant to Statutory test 7(1)(c) of the Order, it is considered there are sound planning reasons for intervening, as detailed below and in the attached Stage 2 Report.
27. The Mayor’s Stage 2 decision and GLA report set out that the proposal would have a significant impact on the implementation of the London Plan, through its potential contribution to housing and affordable housing delivery. In addition, the proposal has the potential to make a significant and positive contribution towards achieving relevant housing targets and London’s housing need, including within the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area.
28. The Council was also advised that the scheme would have delivered new housing and affordable housing in the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area, commercial floor space, landscaping and public realm improvements, and financial contributions. Subject to appropriate conditions and obligations being secured, the scheme could have local and London-wide public benefits. The Mayor’s Stage 2 decision and GLA report advised that it is considered that there are sound planning reasons to intervene and become the local planning authority in respect of the application.
29. In making this decision, the Mayor also had regard to targets identified in development plans pursuant to Article 7(3) of the Order (as detailed within the enclosed GLA Planning report). In this case, the relevant development plan targets relate principally to supply of new homes and affordable homes.

### **Stage 3 (call in)**

30. The Deputy Mayor visited the site on 22 September 2025 with GLA and TfL officers, representatives of the Council, and the applicant team.
31. The Deputy Mayor’s decision on this case, and the reasons for it, will be made available on the GLA’s website ([here](#))<sup>3</sup>.

### **Referral to the Secretary of State**

32. The power of the Secretary of State to call-in an application also exists where the Mayor has called-in an application.

### **Relevant legislation, policies and guidance**

33. The Deputy Mayor must determine the application for planning permission in accordance with the requirement of Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/planning/planning-applications-and-decisions/public-hearings/4-8-sedgemere-road-public-hearing>

Purchase Act 2004. The Deputy Mayor is required to determine the application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan consists of the Bexley Local Plan and Policies Map (2023) and the London Plan 2021.

34. Paragraph 232 of the NPPF (December 2024, as updated) states that existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the NPPF, and that due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. All relevant policies in the adopted development plan are considered to be consistent with the NPPF.
35. The Deputy Mayor is also required to have regard, as material considerations, to national planning policy and guidance, as well as supplementary planning documents and, depending on their state of advancement, emerging elements of the development plan and other planning policies.
36. The relevant planning policy and guidance at the national, regional and local levels are as follows:
  - National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024);
  - National Planning Practice Guidance and Design Guide (as updated);
  - Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2020);
  - Relevant strategic supplementary planning guidance (SPG) and London Plan Guidance (LPG), which can be found on the GLA's website ([here](#))<sup>4</sup>; and,
  - London Borough of Bexley supplementary planning documents and guidance, which can be found on Bexley's website ([here](#))<sup>5</sup>.

## **Response to consultation**

### **Statutory consultee responses**

#### Environment Agency

37. No objection, subject to the inclusion of a flood risk condition relating to the first-floor finished floor level.

#### GLAAS

38. No objection, subject to a two-stage archaeological condition.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/planning/implementing-london-plan/london-plan-guidance>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-guidance/supplementary-planning-documents-and-guidance>

### Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

39. HSE is content with the fire safety design, to the extent it affects land use planning considerations. However, HSE has identified some matters as supplementary information, set out below, that the applicant should try to address, in advance of later regulatory stages.

### Historic England

40. Historic England (HE) raised concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds. HE advised that concerns have consistently been raised about the scale and height of tall building developments proposed in this area of Bexley and that the abbey's connection with the River Thames is increasingly compromised by the encroachment and compendium of tall development in the Abbey Wood area. It was further advised that the proposal is highly visible in views from within and across the Lesnes Abbey site and that the level of harm, in NPPF terms, is on the lower end of 'less than substantial', which will need to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.
41. HE further advised that it is likely that the increase in residents will lead to an increase in visitors to the Abbey park and use of the green open space and woods, potentially bring some management and maintenance pressures. HE indicated that some of the harm identified could be balanced through ensuring that the scheme provides capacity to improve facilities, presentation and maintenance of both the Abbey remains and landscape.

### Design Out Crime Officer (Met Police)

42. Comments provided on designing out crime and condition recommended.

### National Highways

43. No objection.

### Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU) NHS

44. Highlighted that Bexley's GPs, acute and mental healthcare services are under substantial pressure with limited space and recruiting additional clinicians, to provide enhanced services to local people, with the north of LB Bexley high levels of deprivation. The development is expected to increase demand, requiring financial mitigation. A £299,171 financial contribution was requested or if this amount cannot be secured, at minimum, the amount required to mitigate the impacts on primary care services be provided.
45. Commented on the Health Impact Assessment (HIA), highlighting that the GP to patient ratio at the most proximate GP clinic is above the recommended ratio, that the development is likely to put on additional strain at services and mitigation is critical in ensuring that patient services are not negatively impacted.

### London City Airport

46. Confirmed from an aerodrome safeguarding perspective the proposal does not conflict with London City Airport's safeguarding criteria. Provided advice relating to details to be provided by the crane operator, crane notification / permits and CAA guidance for crane lighting/markings.

### Thames Water

47. Thames Water has identified that the existing surface water network does not have sufficient capacity to support the proposed development. Requested a planning condition that all necessary upgrades to accommodate additional flows from the development have been completed, or a phasing plan for development and infrastructure, agreed with Thames Water and the Local Planning Authority, is in place.
48. It was further highlighted in relation to surface water drainage, that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water, that Thames Water would have no objection. Management of surface water from new developments should follow policy SI 13 of the London Plan and the developer must provide full evidence that they have followed the drainage hierarchy and are unable to discharge to a surface water or combined sewer. Thames Water further advised that the foul network is not designed to accommodate surface water flows, therefore, a condition has been added to allow for an assessment of network impact and implementation of reinforcement works if necessary. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required.
49. No objection to foul water network capacity. A planning condition is requested relating to water network infrastructure for the development, as Thames Water has identified an inability of the infrastructure to accommodate the needs of the development.
50. Requested piling method statement to be secured through planning condition. Provided further comments for the applicant's consideration.

### Transport for London (TfL)

51. TfL has no significant objections to the principle of the proposed development however identified further work and clarifications required, along with suggested conditions and obligations.

### **London Borough of Bexley – Internal comments**

#### LBB Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

52. Object to the proposed surface water discharge to the foul network. The LLFA are not able to recommend approval of this development as it does not comply with the London Plan, the London Borough of Bexley's Local Plan and relevant guidance. Allowing new developments to connect to the foul sewer network is in direct contradiction to the current work by Thames Water to remove surface

water from foul sewers, due to the increased risk of combined sewer overflows and the additional burden it places on the sewage treatment works. The LLFA identify that the development would increase pressure on a system that is already under significant strain and allowing this site to discharge into this network will be increasing the risk of combined sewer overflows. Allowing connection to the foul sewer also goes against the principles of the Independent Water Commission (Cunliffe) report and does not manage sewerage infrastructure sustainably.

53. The LLFA further identified that the proposed development would significantly increase the volume of foul water entering the foul sewer and that including surface water into this sewer in addition, would increase the risk of the foul sewer flooding this development, neighbouring sites and the highway.
54. The LLFA commented that the applicant has not followed the drainage hierarchy when selecting their point of discharge for surface water from their development. The LLFA also raise that there are significant concerns with the capacity of the surface water network. Broadly, the LLFA also identify that there is not the infrastructure capacity to cope with new development in this area. It is further identified that large scale investment is needed to upgrade the capacity of the sewerage infrastructure prior to new development coming forward.
55. Inconsistencies within the drainage strategy report were also identified and that the applicant does not have consent from Thames Water to discharge surface water into the foul sewer, as Thames Water state (within their pre-development enquiry response) that their position is subject to LLFA approval.

#### LBB Highway Authority

56. No objection. Requested s106 obligations and planning conditions. Highlighted that the Highway Authority still requires further information from the applicant to be able to fully and properly assess the likely impact of the proposals and agree required mitigation and management details, including how these can be delivered or instigated.

#### LBB Conservation Officer

57. Identified that the proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of Lesnes Abbey. Raised objections / concerns with the height of the proposed tall building within the context of tall building policy, visual and heritage impacts.

#### LBB Education

58. No objection, sufficient school spaces.

#### LBB Environmental Health

59. No objections received. Requested planning conditions relating to air quality, noise, demolition/construction noise and emissions, commercial opening hours, commercial extraction ventilation and external lighting.

#### LBB Contaminated Land Officer

60. No objections received. Requested further planning condition relating to contaminated land investigation, remediation and verification.

#### LBB Planning Policy Ecology, Energy

61. No objections received. Provided comments covering ecology, biodiversity net gain, urban greening and energy and requested relevant conditions and obligations.

#### LBB Planning Policy Strategic Planning

62. Raised objection to building height. Further comments provided relating to town centre uses, design and affordable housing.

#### LBB Economic Development Town Centre

63. Welcomed increase in employment floorspace. Estimated that circa 21 jobs would be generated on site and acknowledged beneficial effect on economic activity through new residents.

#### LBB Housing

64. LB Bexley accepts that London Plan asks to take a 'positive approach' to Build to Rent (BtR). Preference is for all of the affordable properties to be provided as London Living Rent and raised concerns around the anticipated private rent levels and discounted market rents for the development, and that these contrast with the current average rent levels in Bexley. Any opportunity to explore the potential reduction of rent levels (particularly for discount market rent properties), would be welcomed. Raised concerns with unit mix and provided further comments on wheelchair accommodation and request for initial marketing of the affordable homes for LB Bexley residents.

#### LBB Urban Design

65. Raised objection / concerns with building height. The proposed building is considered incongruous to its surroundings, given the considerable additional height to the tall buildings nearby (located within the Royal Borough of Greenwich). The proposed scale is considered overdevelopment of the site and is not supported. Concerns with daylight and sunlight analysis, although noted Council has appointed an independent consultant to review. Concern that sufficient waste storage will not be provided
66. Welcomed dual aspect units, new connection and approach to materiality, additional Class E units and active frontages. Requested further details to be secured through planning conditions and issues further comments issued for consideration.

#### LBB Waste

67. The waste and recycling capacities suggested are acceptable, as is the location of the bin-store. Raised issues with bin storage and management, collections.

## **Individual neighbourhood responses**

68. As part of the public consultation process, Bexley Council publicised the application by sending notifications to local addresses, issuing site and press notices and consulting relevant statutory bodies.
69. Following the neighbourhood consultation process, Bexley Council received a total of 11 responses in objection. Copies of all responses to public consultation, and any other representations made on the case, have been made available to the GLA, and are summarised below:

### Building height and scale

- Building height is deemed excessive, disproportionate and out of character with the surrounding area, disrupting character and identity of the community. Building would dramatically alter skyline and would be overbearing.
- Concerns about setting a precedent for further high density urbanisation in the outer London.

### Neighbouring amenity

- Overshadowing of nearby gardens, homes and public spaces. Loss of daylight and sunlight.
- Loss of privacy and sense of security due to overlooking from the proposed building. Increased feeling of enclosure.
- Resulting impacts on health, mental health, well-being and functionality of neighbouring gardens including for food cultivation, safety, security, peace and order, overall standard of living.

### Infrastructure and amenities

- Concerns about additional strain on local infrastructure which are under pressure, such as schools, GP surgeries, and public transport. Resulting impacts on both current and future residents' quality of life
- Insufficient car parking provisions for the new residents. Increased parking pressures within area.
- Increased traffic and traffic congestion, including resulting impacts on noise pollution and potentially road safety.

### Construction impact

- Prolonged disruption caused by construction, including air pollution, noise, dust, overlooking and restricted access which could impact residents' health, inconvenience residents and could impact local businesses.
- Concerns that smaller businesses may suffer due to reduced foot traffic and accessibility.
- Impacts resulting from construction traffic and parking.
- Risk to the structural integrity of nearby properties, especially due to marshland conditions.

### Housing, housing mix and quality

- The homes proposed appear to be too expensive for the area.
- Proposal will drive away the existing residents.
- Mix of housing is not suitable, as there are a disproportionate number of studio and one bedroom units, unsuitable for family living.
- Limited effective amenity space for larger units, making them less practical for long-term living.
- Doubts about viability claims tied to reduced affordable housing provision.

### Other specific concerns

- Potential property value depreciation due to the scale and impact of the development. Monetary cost implications for neighbours.
- Demolition of existing commercial buildings, including a garage used by local residents.
- Business owners are being compensated to relocate.

### Representations made to the Mayor of London

70. The Mayor took over the planning application for his own determination on 20 May 2025. Letters were sent to neighbours outlining that the Mayor would be responsible for determining this planning application instead of the Council. The letters advised that if substantial amendments are made to the application, a public consultation would be held.
71. As outlined in this report, there were no substantial amendments made to the application following the decision to call in the application which would warrant further public consultation.
72. At the time of writing, no direct representations to the Mayor of London from the public have been received.

### **Principal planning issues**

73. Having regard to the site and the details of the proposed development, relevant planning policy at the local, regional and national levels; and, the consultation responses and representations received, the principal planning issues raised by the application that the Deputy Mayor must consider are:
  - Land use principles;
  - Affordable housing and housing mix;
  - Urban design considerations;
  - Impact on heritage assets;

- Amenity impacts for future occupiers within the development and for neighbouring properties;
- Sustainable infrastructure and environmental matters;
- Transport and highway matters;
- Mitigating the impact of development through planning obligations;
- Legal considerations; and
- Planning balance.

74. These issues are considered in the following sections of this report.

### **Land use principles**

75. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the London Plan encourage the efficient use and optimisation of land, particularly brownfield sites and where they are underutilised or no longer suitable for their current use. Chapter 11 of the NPPF promotes the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
76. The London Plan sets out six good growth objectives, which includes Good Growth Objective GG2 which seeks to make the best use of land to create successful sustainable mixed-use places, including through enabling the development of brownfield land, particularly in Opportunity Areas and within town centres and by prioritising sites which are well-connected by public transport (amongst other things). Chapter 2 of the London Plan sets out spatial development policies which reinforce London's growth corridors, Opportunity Areas, town centres as focal points for intensification.
77. London Plan policy SD1 specifically seeks to ensure that Opportunity Areas fully realise their growth and regeneration potential. London Plan policy SD6 further directs that potential for new housing within town centres should be realised through mixed-use or residential development that makes best use of land and capitalises on active and public transport accessibility.
78. The site is located within the Thames Estuary Growth Corridor, Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area and Abbey Wood Village Local Town Centre. Thamesmead and Abbey Wood is identified as having the potential for 8,000 new homes and 4,000 new jobs by 2041. Identified interventions referenced in the London Plan to support the growth of the Opportunity Area (amongst others) include the redevelopment and intensification of employment sites to enable a range of new activities and workspaces to be created in parallel with new housing development and the creation of a new local centre around Abbey Wood station.
79. Bexley's Local Plan also sets out a strategic spatial vision for sustainable growth that focuses higher density mixed-use development towards around

public transport and town centre nodes, along with the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area. Bexley's Local Plan policy SP1 directs growth to the Opportunity Area and designated Sustainable Development Locations, which includes Abbey Wood. Policy SP1 further sets out principles for new development in these areas to deliver high quality housing and employment opportunities, improve accessibility, and support regeneration objectives.

80. Town centre intensification, modernisation and employment growth is also promoted across Bexley Local Plan policies SP3 and SP4 including support proposals for main town centre uses and residential-led development on appropriate sites. Local Plan policy SP4 seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's town centres.

#### Loss of existing use and proposed non-residential town centre uses

81. The site currently accommodates lower-scale commercial uses including a car repair garage, ancillary structures and storage. The current site does not lie within any protected industrial or employment area and is therefore classified as a non-designated industrial site.
82. London Plan policy E7 part C sets out the scenarios where residential proposals on non-designated industrial sites can be supported, including where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for the industrial and related purposes, or where a site has been allocated in an adopted local Development Plan Document for residential or mixed-use development. Bexley Local Plan policy DP7 also sets out that non-designated industrial sites should be assessed in line with criteria set out in London Plan policies.
83. The site is not strictly allocated for residential or mixed-use development and supporting evidence has not been provided relating to the site's potential for future use for industrial and related purposes. GLA officers recognise, however, that the proposed development would replace the existing low-density industrial type uses with flexible commercial uses compatible with the site's location within Abbey Wood Village Town Centre. The site has been identified for residential growth and town centre-type uses without suggestion of replacement industrial capacity on the site within the Local Plan and Opportunity Area Planning Framework. It is further noted that the site has previously benefitted from a recently expired residential-led planning permission that did not re-provide industrial floorspace on the site. It is not considered that the long-term retention of industrial type uses would be a reasonable or appropriate response to relevant planning policy objectives applicable to the site in this instance.
84. The proposed scheme includes 370.4 sqm of flexible Class E and F2(b) floorspace at ground floor, which allows for a variety of employment generating and community serving uses which would be better aligned with the town centre policy objectives than the existing low density, industrial-type and vehicle-based operations. The introduction of flexible, town centre compatible commercial space aligns with London Plan policies SD6, SD7 and E9, as well as Bexley Local Plan policies SP4 and DP9. The proposed uses would result in

an overall enhancement in terms of land use compatibility and contribution to town centre vitality and employment growth opportunities, delivering suitable activation, along with improvements relating to economic diversification, adaptability and local access to services appropriate for the town centre location.

85. Overall, GLA officers consider that the loss of the existing industrial floorspace is acceptable in this instance in response to the aims of relevant development plan policy objectives. The introduction of Class E and F2(b) floorspace aligns with policy aspirations for the town centre, Sustainable Development Location and Opportunity Area.

#### Proposed residential use and housing supply

86. The NPPF and the London Plan seek and encourage the delivery of housing through optimising appropriate sites. Chapter 5 of the NPPF places emphasis on boosting the supply of homes and that overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.
87. London Plan Policy H1 seeks to increase housing supply in London and sets ten-year targets for net housing completions that each local planning authority should plan for through the preparation of development plans. Policy H1 also sets out particular sources of capacity including accessible, town centre and low-density sites appropriate for housing intensification.
88. The Mayor's 10-year (2019/20-2028/29) housing target for Bexley of 6,850 (net) new homes is reflected in Bexley Local Plan policy SP2 for the plan period between 2030 and 2038, subject to any review of the London Plan. Policy SP2 sets out that a greater number of homes will be supported, subject to compliance with all relevant Development Plan policies. It is noted that the borough is generally performing well against the London Plan housing targets.
89. Diversification of the housebuilding industry through increased Build to Rent development to support housing supply is also promoted in the London Plan and Mayor's Housing Strategy. London Plan supporting text sets out that Boroughs should take a positive approach to the Build to Rent sector to enable it to better contribute to the delivery of new homes. London Plan policy SD6 sets out the particular suitability of town centres to accommodate a diverse range of housing, including Build to Rent accommodation.
90. Whilst the Bexley Local Plan does not include policies specific to Build to Rent accommodation, the role of the rented sector in meeting housing need in the borough is acknowledged and that, within the context of affordable housing, that the Council will support proposals for new purpose built private rented sector accommodation where such schemes meet local need and requirements of the London Plan.
91. The proposed development would bring forward 228 new purpose-built rental homes in the highly accessible, town centre and Opportunity Area location in proximity to Abbey Wood Station, contributing positively to housing supply and

tenure diversification objectives. The proposal would make a welcomed contribution towards meeting Bexley and London-wide housing delivery targets. The delivery of 228 new homes, supporting both local and strategic policy objectives to increase housing supply in a sustainable manner is afforded significant weight in the planning balance.

92. Suitable obligations would be secured in the s106 agreement to ensure that the development is in compliance with the build-to-rent criteria set out within London Plan policy H11(Part B).

Land use conclusion

93. The proposed development would be acceptable in land use terms and would suitably respond to the London Plan’s Good Growth principles and national, regional and local planning policy objectives, subject to appropriate conditions and obligations.

**Affordable housing and housing mix**

94. The proposed tenure and housing mix is as follows:

	Studio	1 Bed 2P	2 Bed 3P	2 Bed 4P	3 Bed 5P	3 Bed 6P	TOTAL
<b>London Living Rent</b>							
<b>Unit</b>	0	0	0	0	18	9	27
<b>Habitable room</b>	0	0	0	0	72	36	108
<b>Discounted market rent</b>							
<b>Unit</b>	0	0	23	11	0	0	34
<b>Habitable room</b>	0	0	69	33	0	0	102
<b>Private rent</b>							
<b>Unit</b>	18	82	10	52	5	0	167
<b>Habitable room</b>	18	164	30	156	20	0	388
<b>Unit</b>	18	82	33	63	23	9	228
<b>Habitable room</b>	18	164	99	189	92	36	598

Affordable housing

95. The NPPF states that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures.

96. Policies H4, H5 and H6 of the London Plan promote the maximisation of affordable housing delivery and ensuring that supply is genuinely affordable. Policy H4 and the Mayor's Affordable Housing and Viability SPG set a strategic target of 50% affordable housing in all new developments. Bexley Local Plan policy SP2 also establishes a strategic target of 50% affordable housing as a proportion of all qualifying provision across the borough over the plan period.
97. London Plan policies H5 and H11 and the Mayor's Affordable Housing and Viability SPG identify a threshold for the Fast Track Route of 50% affordable housing, without public subsidy, for schemes on industrial land where the scheme would result in a net loss of industrial capacity. In such cases, developments which meet other criteria are not required to submit viability information, nor would the application be subject to a late-stage review mechanism. As reported earlier within this report, the site is classified as a non-designated industrial site and therefore the 50% affordable housing threshold applies.
98. Bexley Local Plan policy DP1 sets out that residential development proposals follow the London Plan threshold approach, however supporting text also sets out that purpose built private rented schemes will be assessed under a specific viability approach that recognises the distinct economics of this sector. It is also mentioned that the Council will support proposals for new purpose built private rented sector accommodation where such schemes meet local need and requirements of the London Plan.
99. Regarding affordable housing tenure, London Plan policy H11 sets out the Mayor's expectation for Build to Rent schemes for at least 30% of affordable units to be provided at discount market rents equivalent to London Living Rent levels with the remaining 70% at a range of genuinely affordable rents. At the local level, Bexley's Local Plan sets out a tenure mix of 70% low cost rented and 30% intermediate housing products and does not set tenure split criteria specific to Build to Rent development. Bexley have not published any local requirements concerning rental levels for discount market rental homes.
100. The proposed development includes 35% affordable housing by habitable room (27% by unit), equating to 61 affordable units. This would consist of 51% London Living Rent accommodation by habitable room (44% by unit) with 49% to be provided at discounted market rents (56% by unit). The affordable offer has been revised to include an increased proportion of affordable homes to be provided at London Living Rent by habitable room (an increase from 30% of overall affordable housing offer), with a particular focus on larger, family sized affordable units. GLA officers consider that the affordable housing offer provides the maximum proportion of accommodation at London Living Rent levels within the viability position of the development.
101. The rents proposed within the scheme would adhere to London Plan affordability and eligibility criteria for London Living Rent and Discounted Market Rent (DMR) homes, with the 2-bedroom 3 and 4 person DMR homes able to be provided up to the current London-wide affordable housing cap for intermediate rent of £1,563, which would equate to rents (68% and 74%) below 80% of the open market rents for the development agreed with GLA viability

officers. The 2025-26 Thamesmead East ward London Living Rent benchmark for 3-bedroom accommodation is £1,374. Affordability levels would be secured in the S106 agreement and would meet policy criteria.

102. The application is supported by a Financial Viability Appraisal (FVA) which has been reviewed by the GLA's viability officers, which includes additional information which was requested during the course of the application. GLA viability officers have concluded that, alongside the other necessary planning obligations and mitigations to make the development acceptable, the proposed affordable housing offer exceeds the maximum provision which can be supported at the present day.
103. In this case, only an early-stage review would be secured in the s106 agreement. Whilst required by London Plan policies H4 and H5 and Bexley's Local Plan, a late-stage review would not be secured in this instance. Within the overall planning balance and a combination of factors applicable in this case, GLA officers consider this to be reasonable. The applicant has improved the affordable housing offer consecutively during the course of the application, initially from 20% to 35% and then through improvements to tenure split, exceeding the requirement for London Living Rent in London Plan policy H11. Furthermore, the provision of 51% of the affordable accommodation as London Living Rent falls close to the equivalent provision of 50% affordable housing overall at the tenure split required under London Plan policies H6 and H11. It is also noted that the site has been identified for residential, along with town centre-type ground floor uses
104. The s106 would include obligations for the applicant to use reasonable endeavours to market the affordable units to Bexley residents in accordance with a targeted marketing scheme submitted to the Council for approval. The affordable homes would also be tenure blind and integrated into the wider scheme.
105. In conclusion, GLA officers consider the approach to affordable housing acceptable in response to relevant planning policy requirements, with the omission of the late-stage viability review considered to be a reasonable approach in this instance including due to the provision of a level of London Living Rent that exceeds London Plan tenure requirements. The applicant's affordable housing offer provides a positive and significant contribution to the overall public benefits package.

#### Housing mix

106. London Plan Policy H10 sets out all the issues that applicants and boroughs should take into account when considering the mix of homes on a site. This includes (amongst other things) that housing mix should be determined having regard to local housing need and evidence and contextual considerations relevant to the site and development. Bexley Local Plan Policy DP3 sets out a mix of housing types and sizes needed, as identified in the Bexley Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). Policy DP1 emphasises the need for larger dwellings across tenures.

107. The overall unit mix comprises 18 studio units (8%), 82 1-bedroom units (36%), 96 2-bedroom units (42%), and 32 3-bedroom units (14%). The intermediate rent component provides entirely 2-bedroom (49%) and 3-bedroom (51%) dwellings.
108. The proposed development is weighted in favour of 1-bedroom units compared to the identified percentage target mix in the SHMA and Policy DP1 (9.6%) and the inclusion of studios is not reflected in Bexley's Housing Requirements. The overall proportion of 2-bedroom units is broadly in line with the SHMA percentage target mix figure (39.8%) whilst the 3-bedroom figure is lower than the SHMA figure of 34.5%. The intermediate rent homes marginally exceed the SHMA figures for 2-bedroom (42.7%) and 3-bedroom (34%) homes.
109. The site comes forward within the Abbey Wood Village town centre in a highly accessible location which supports higher density development. London Plan Policy H10 acknowledges that a higher proportion of one and two bed units are generally more appropriate in locations which are closer to a town centre or station or with higher public transport access and connectivity. The scheme delivers a variety of unit sizes, including the provision of three-bedroom homes, including affordable rental homes, and is considered to provide an acceptable overall approach to housing mix in response to the requirements of London Plan Policy H10 and Local Plan Policies SP2 and DP1.

### **Urban design, impact on the character and appearance of the area**

110. Chapter 12 of the NPPF promotes well-designed places. The NPPF states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It goes on to state that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
111. In achieving the Mayor's vision and objectives relating to neighbourhoods and architecture, Chapter 3 of the London Plan sets out a series of policies about the places and spaces in which Londoners live, work and visit. London Plan Policy D4 sets the overarching design principles for development in London. Other relevant design policies in this chapter include specific design requirements relating to: optimising site capacity (Policy D3); inclusive design (Policy D5); housing quality and standards (Policy D6); accessible housing (Policy D7); public realm (Policy D8); tall buildings (Policy D9); designing out crime (Policy D11); and fire safety (Policies D5 and D12) and noise (Policy D14).
112. Chapter 4 of Bexley's Local Plan sets out design-related policies, which include Policy SP5: Placemaking through good design; DP11: Achieving high-quality design; DP12: Tall buildings and building heights; and, Policy DP13 Protecting local views. Chapter 4 also includes heritage-focused policies which are covered within the following section of this report.

113. Local Plan policy SP5 sets out the broader principles to achieving high-quality design within the borough, which includes how a high-quality standard of development design is expected, that development contributes positively to the local environment, and protects the best elements of Bexley's character. Policy SP5 also seeks to ensure that design enhances social cohesion and health and wellbeing, considers the principles of inclusive and active design, and that design considers the relationships between building and spaces.
114. Bexley Local Plan policy DP11 provides additional detail to ensure the creation of well-designed developments that respond positively and effectively to the locally specific character of the area. Part 2 of the policy sets out detailed requirements in relation to character, landscaping, privacy, outlook and adverse impacts, quality of residential accommodation, crime and advertisements.
115. Local Plan policy DP12 sets out criteria for the management of borough-wide building heights and tall buildings. Policy DP 12 sets out that proposed heights for buildings should reflect other design and policy requirements, including the requirement to have regard to the existing or emerging character and context of the area. Within and near the town centres of Abbey Wood Village, it provides that the maximum height of buildings should not normally be more than 45 metres. Further locational and design criteria for tall buildings is provided. Policy DP12 also sets out that where buildings over 15 metres are proposed, applicants must submit design appraisals with alternative options to demonstrate whether similar densities can be achieved using more traditional and human-scaled typologies.
116. Local Plan policy DP13 seeks to protect local views. It provides certain criteria that should be met by development proposals. Policy DP13 also states that development proposals that will have a significant adverse impact on the aesthetic and character of a Local Protected View will be resisted. Proposals should not result in adverse impacts to non-designated views identified through the Development Management process.
117. The Bexley Design SPD was also published in 2025 which sets out detailed guidance to ensure high-quality, contextually responsive development across the borough.

#### Design scrutiny

118. London Plan policy D4 requires development proposals referable to the Mayor to have undergone at least one design review early on in their preparation before a planning application is made, or demonstrate that they have undergone a local borough process of design scrutiny.
119. An earlier iteration of the scheme was reviewed by the Bexley Design Review Panel (a copy of the response has been provided to GLA officers) and the design has gone through a pre-application process of design scrutiny by both GLA and LB Bexley officers which has informed the proposed scheme. Bexley's Design Review Panel reviewed a smaller scheme comprising of heights up to 21 storeys. The Panel provided several recommendations, which included that the massing and height, response to context, and quality of public

realm required further work (amongst further matters). On building height specifically, concerns were identified with the building's relationship with its immediate context particularly the transition from suburban housing to taller developments. The panel also encouraged further opportunity to review the scheme again ahead of a planning submission which is noted did not occur.

120. GLA officers consider that the design has evolved positively since earlier iterations presented to officers and to the Design Review Panel, which is illustrated within the application Design and Access Statement. It is considered that the design has been subject to suitable design scrutiny in accordance with the objectives of London Plan policy D4. Relevant design aspects of the proposal are assessed within the paragraphs below.

#### Scale, massing, height and architectural quality

121. London Plan policy D9 in parts A and B sets out that boroughs should define what is considered a tall building and identify suitable locations and appropriate tall building heights on maps. The policy goes on to set out a criteria for assessing tall buildings in Part C, including addressing visual, functional, environmental and cumulative impacts. Part D requires that appropriate public access is secured to tall buildings. London Plan policies HC3 and HC4 seek to identify and protect local and strategic views.
122. Bexley Local Plan policy DP12 establishes a definition of tall buildings which states that tall buildings in Bexley are more than 25 metres in height. Policy DP12 identifies a number of suitable locations for tall buildings including Abbey Wood Village (within which this site falls) and provides that buildings within or near the town centre of Abbey Wood should not normally exceed 45 metres (typically equivalent to 15 storeys). This is based on evidence within the Bexley Local Character Study (2021), Urban Morphology Study (2019) and Building Heights Technical Paper. Paragraph 4.27 the explanatory text to policy DP12 explains that the policy seeks to achieve higher levels of residential density. Where a taller building is proposed for housing, it explains that developers should submit alternative design approaches that employ more traditional typologies to demonstrate whether equivalent residential densities can be achieved. The policy sets out a number of criteria relating to design and tall building impacts.
123. Outline consent 16/01275/OUTM (which recently lapsed in December 2024) allowed for buildings up to 51.4 metres in height on the site (maximum parameter), which would have been subject to review of further detailed design at reserved matters stage. Whilst now expired, the maximum heights previously permitted through this consent indicate a height which was acceptable by the local planning authority at the time of its approval.
124. The site is identified in the Local Plan as suitable for tall buildings, albeit policy DP12 provides that such buildings should not normally exceed 45 metres (15 storeys). The proposal, at approximately 85 metres (AOD, 25 storeys) exceeds 45 metres. This gives rise to some conflict with Local Plan policy DP12 and London Plan policy D9 (part B). Whilst the proposal does not fully comply with

the locational aspect of policy D9 or the normally expected height in policy DP12, impacts of the tall buildings also require assessment under policy D9(C) and DP12 (part 4) to conclude on the overall acceptability of the tall buildings, along with the overall compliance with the development plan as a whole and the public benefits to be derived from the scheme.

125. An assessment of the proposed tall building against policies D9 of the London Plan and D12 of the Local Plan is set out below.

#### *Tall building visual impacts*

126. London Plan policy D9(C,1 (a)) provides that development proposals should address visual impacts, including long-range; mid-range and immediate views. Attention should be paid to the top of the building to make a positive contribution to the existing and emerging skyline; to the form and proportion of the building to make a positive contribution to the local townscape in terms of legibility, proportions and materials; and to the base of the building to ensure it has a direct relationship with the street and provides an appropriate transition in scale with the surrounding context.

#### *Assessment from long, mid-range and immediate views*

127. The proposed development would come forward within a short distance to the east of existing tall buildings on the opposite side of Harrow Manorway within the London Borough of Greenwich. The proposed tall building, whilst taller and more prominent than existing neighbouring buildings and those emerging within the wider area towards Thamesmead, would still clearly be perceived within a cluster of tall buildings situated towards Abbey Wood station within longer distance views. It is considered that the building would successfully integrate with this cluster and being of good design quality, would result in a positive contribution to the existing and emerging skyline in line with long-range visual impact criteria. Attention has been given to the design of the top of the building with the inclusion of a lighter crown which GLA officers consider relates well to similar features within the roofscapes of the immediate neighbouring tall buildings. Furthermore, the proposed development would not adversely impact protected strategic or local views. The development would sit to the north of the Protected Local View from the Lesnes Abbey viewing platform to Canary Wharf and is unlikely to adversely impact the composition, aesthetic or character of this view.
128. London Plan policy D9 also requires assessment from mid-range and immediate views from the surrounding neighbourhood and streets. Due to the predominantly low-rise surroundings directly east of the site in particular, the 25-storey element of the building would be significantly taller than the surrounding terraced properties and immediate neighbourhood. Whilst there would be a notable height differential from the existing lower immediate surrounds to the east, the building is considered to be of good design quality in terms of its slender proportions and form and will act as a marker for the station. The shoulder height at 7 storeys to the northern end of the development would also assist with limiting the impacts of the change in scale

on the immediate properties on the eastern side of Sedgemere Road, including protection of amenity and privacy as required by policy D9(c,1,iii).

129. Within the context above it is also considered that a noticeable change in scale from the predominantly two-storey surroundings could reasonably be expected from tall buildings coming forward within the Local Plan tall building (and wider growth) designation. The proposed development does not play a mediating role between existing tall buildings to the west and the lower-scale immediate surroundings as encouraged by the Design Review Panel. However, it is also considered that impacts on the immediate townscape resulting from the proposed building height and tower typology are likely to remain broadly in line with development that could reasonably be expected to come forward in this location to deliver on wider sustainable growth objectives. It is noted in this respect that the application HTVIA enables some visual comparison with the lower, now expired permission. It is considered that the proportions of the building are appropriate when considering both existing and emerging contextual local townscape considerations. The building is otherwise well designed in terms of its materiality which draws on local contextual cues and the base of the tower is well defined, animated and lively to integrate the development within the immediate street scene on Sedgemere Road and Harrow Manorway.
130. To conclude, GLA Officers consider that the development is consistent with the requirements of policy D9 (C, 1, parts ii and iii).

#### *Contribution to spatial hierarchy*

131. Policy D9(b) requires that whether part of a group or stand-alone, tall buildings should reinforce the spatial hierarchy of the local and wider context and aid legibility and wayfinding. GLA officers consider the development to accord with this policy requirement and are satisfied that there is a spatial justification for increased building height in this location. The development would act as a marker with other taller buildings situated to the west within the Royal Borough of Greenwich due to its proximity to the Abbey Wood Station (which for avoidance of doubt, is not dependent on equivalent or taller heights coming forward on adjacent sites).

#### *Architectural quality*

132. Policy D9(c) provides that the architectural quality and materials of tall buildings should be of an exemplary standard to ensure that the appearance and integrity of the building is maintained through its lifespan. The building is of a slender form is suitably articulated, notably with the inclusion of partially inset balconies bringing depth and relief to the facades. Officers are also supportive of the material strategy, which gives the building a varied expression and appearance through the interplay of vertical and horizontal elements, including bedroom windows providing vertical emphasis with an elongated proportion with contrasting darker brick and horizontal banding. The materials within the submission would sit comfortably with the surrounding brick homes on Sedgemere Road and beyond. Measures to secure detailed design quality

would be secured through planning condition and for the reasons above it is considered to be of an exemplary standard in accordance with policy D9(c).

#### *Impacts to surrounding historic environment*

133. Policy D9(C,1,d) addresses impacts on heritage assets and their setting. Impacts to surrounding heritage assets are discussed further in the heritage section of this report. The proposed development would result in some less than substantial harm to the setting and significance of Lesnes Abbey, although in line with Policy D9(C,1,d) GLA officers consider that clear and convincing justification has been provided, alternative design options have been explored and that (following improvements over the course of the application) there are clear public benefits that outweigh that harm. For these reasons, it is considered that the development would contribute positively to what is an evolving character of the area.

#### *Other visual tall building impacts*

134. No other tall building visual tall building impacts are identified in response to London Plan policy D9 relating to World Heritage Sites, the River Thames, adverse solar glare and light pollution, with the latter also addressed through planning condition.

#### *Local Plan tall building visual impact assessment*

135. Local Plan policy DP12 identifies the following criteria specific to the visual assessment of tall buildings:

- The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on local character, including heritage assets;
- The design considers topography;
- The design is of high architectural quality; and,
- The proposal will integrate into its surroundings at all levels, particularly at street level and into the skyline.

136. In response to the above, GLA officers are satisfied that the design would be of a high quality and has considered local topographical conditions to a reasonable extent for the development proposal through the analysis contained within the accompanying Design and Access Statement and Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The proposal is considered to accord with policy DP12(4,d,f).

137. As highlighted within the London Plan tall building visual assessment above, the proposed development as result of its proposed height, would be a prominent addition from certain viewpoints within the local townscape. The prevailing scale of the surrounding development to the east (in particular), which, although containing existing taller development towards Thamesmead, remains relatively low-rise. Officers consider that the proposed development would, however, successfully integrate into its immediate surroundings given that tall buildings are already present towards Abbey Wood station up to 21

storeys (approx. 70 metres AOD) and emerging taller development is planned along Harrow Manorway. The building is also considered to integrate with the immediate surroundings with animated frontages and activation at lower levels, lower stepped height to the north and suitable materiality.

138. It is not considered that the proposed development would result in any unacceptable adverse impact on local character, including heritage assets. Whilst the proposed development would result in some adverse impact to Lesnes Abbey, as discussed elsewhere in this report, impacts would be outweighed by the public benefits of the development. It is not considered therefore that the development would conflict with policy DP12(4,c).

#### *Functional tall building impacts*

139. GLA officers are satisfied that the proposed development would align with the functional tall building criteria set out within London Plan policy D9(C)(2) and Bexley Local Plan policy DP12 which requires sufficient access to public transport and access to local services and facilities.
140. Building operational management strategies and information accompanying the application have been reviewed with no significant concerns identified. Any outstanding functional aspects requiring further detail relating to servicing and building management have been addressed through planning conditions.
141. The proposed development comes forward within a highly accessible location within the Opportunity Area and would not result in unacceptable impacts relating to access to public transport or local services and facilities, with mitigation secured relating to the immediate highway and surrounding active travel environment. The ground floor layout has also been further optimised through the course of the application to maximise commercial floorspace and associated economic benefits of the proposal.
142. The safety of occupants is considered to be acceptable, with fire safety further discussed in this report. The proposed development is not expected to result in any other functional tall building impacts and is policy compliant in this regard.

#### *Environmental tall building impacts*

143. Matters relating to wind microclimate, daylight and sunlight, air quality, noise and flood risk have been fully considered against London Plan and Local Plan policies as set out in the relevant sections of this report below. In summary, it is considered that there would not be any significant detrimental impacts upon neighbouring properties or external spaces surrounding the development in terms of daylight and sunlight that would warrant refusal of the application. GLA officers consider the proposal to be acceptable in terms of wind microclimate, air quality, noise and flood risk subject to appropriate mitigation and final details which would be secured through conditions. Accordingly, the development is considered to meet the requirements of London Plan policy D9(C)(3) and Local Plan policy DP12 in this respect.

#### *Cumulative tall building impacts*

144. GLA officers are satisfied that with mitigation secured as described above, that the proposed development would not result in unacceptable impacts in the cumulative scenario with other existing, consented or planned tall buildings.

*Public access*

145. The development is for residential accommodation and would afford limited viewing opportunities for the public. It is not considered appropriate in this instance to provide public access to the upper floors of the building.

*Design options appraisal*

146. It is considered that the applicant has sufficiently demonstrated options testing both throughout the pre-application process, which included meetings with GLA officers, and contained within the accompanying Design and Access Statement to support the proposed tower typology, massing configuration and layout, which is required by Part 3 of Local Plan policy DP12. Officers consider that on the constrained site (with resulting limitations on building form), the design option appraisal undertaken is acceptable to demonstrate why the proposed building typology was selected to support the density proposed.

*Tall building conclusion*

147. In summary, whilst the proposal would not fully comply with London Plan and Local Plan locational criteria. it is, however, considered to be acceptable in response to the detailed criteria set out within London Plan policy D9(C) and Local Plan policy DP12(4). It is further considered that an appropriate and acceptable design options appraisal has been undertaken in line with Local Plan policy DP12(3). In conjunction with the above, when considering the improved public benefits package and compliance with the development plan when read as a whole that the proposed tall building is acceptable.

Impact on neighbourhood character and design quality

148. London Plan policy D3 requires the optimisation of site capacity through a design-led approach, whilst accounting for existing and proposed infrastructure. Part D of London Plan policy D3 sets out detailed criteria for the assessment of development proposals including those which relate to form, quality and character.
149. Local Plan policy SP5 sets out that the Council will continue to expect high quality standards of design in Bexley. Design should respect the existing character and context but need not be constrained by what already exists; local character evolves over time. Policy SP5 goes on to state that the Council will seek to ensure that all development within the borough is of high-quality design, contributes positively to the local environment, and protects the best elements of Bexley's character.
150. Whilst Policy SP5 sets out the broader principles to achieving high-quality design within the borough, Local Plan policy DP11 provides additional detail to ensure the creation of well-designed developments that respond positively and

effectively to the locally specific character of the area. In relation to character, policy DP11(2,a) states that development proposals will be expected to ensure that the layout, height, scale and massing, façade treatment, and materials are complimentary to the surrounding area contribute positively to the street scene.

151. Local Plan DP12(1) sets out within the context of borough-wide building heights that proposed heights should reflect other design and policy requirements, including the requirement to have regard to the existing or emerging character and context of the area.
152. When assessed against the wider design policies set out above, GLA officers consider that the design would enable the optimisation of the site, would be of a high quality and would complement existing and emerging development coming forward within the surrounding area, contributing positively to the local environment and street scene in line with policy objectives.
153. In addition, the development would, in GLA officers view, remain generally in keeping with the heights and scale of recent tall buildings situated in the immediate vicinity of the site towards Abbey Wood station within the London Borough of Greenwich. Emerging development along Harrow Manorway is also likely to further contribute towards a changing character of the area within the identified tall building and growth designations.
154. The architectural design of the development demonstrates consideration of the local context through the inclusion of complementary materials which draw on local references. It is considered that the contextually informed design is in accordance with the principles of London Plan Policy D3 and Bexley Local Plan Policy DP11(1), which encourages development to incorporate elements that reflect and reinforce local identity.
155. Overall, GLA officers consider that the proposed development would accord with London Plan policy D3 and Local Plan policies SP5 and DP11, DP12(1).

#### Development layout and public realm

156. London Plan policies D3, D5 and D8 along with Local Plan policies SP5 and DP11 set out design criteria relating to layout and public realm quality and (amongst others) to ensure that layout contributes to the surrounding street scene, shaping of the public realm and pedestrian environment, promoting legibility, safety, connectivity, inclusivity and activation.
157. The proposed site layout would improve permeability and responds positively to surrounding streets. The new east-west route through the site is especially positive, providing enhanced connection from Harrow Manorway to Sedgemere Road to support wider movement objectives. The building layout and massing provide suitable definition to site edges and responds positively to existing street patterns and the immediate context, providing a coherent edge to Harrow Manorway and a greater, landscaped setback to the east to manage transition to lower rise houses.

158. The distribution of active uses and communal spaces fronting the new through route and Harrow Manorway would contribute to passive surveillance and public realm activation in line with policy objectives. Whilst the Sedgemere Road frontage would accommodate the majority of ancillary uses such as cycle storage, plant, and a refuse, the applicant has improved the ground layout over the course of the application to improve activation, it is considered that an acceptable balance is achieved.
159. New public realm areas with differing characters would be created on both Harrow Manorway and Sedgemere Road frontages, supported by landscaping which would result in a considerable improvement to the pedestrian environment from the existing site condition. The proposed public spaces demonstrate a design-led approach and focus on creating a safe and inclusive environment. GLA officers are satisfied that the applicant has sought to maximise urban greening measures and environmental conditions at street level would be acceptable with relevant mitigations. A mixture of lighting fixtures as part of a lighting strategy are proposed to ensure safety at night, details of which would be secured.
160. A package of measures would be secured to manage layout and public realm matters, including details relating to public realm accessibility, management and maintenance, materials, soft and hard landscaping, play space provision, external lighting, along with strategies relating to building management and operations.
161. GLA officers are satisfied that with measures secured, the development layout, public realm and landscaping proposals would accord with the requirements of London Plan policies D3, D5 and D8 and Local Plan policies SP5 and D11.

#### Quality of accommodation

162. London Plan policy D6 sets out policies and standards to ensure that housing development is of high-quality design. Local Plan Policy DP1 states that development proposals for new housing must achieve relevant London Plan space, accessibility, environmental, and housing amenity standards, having regard to published guidance. Local Plan policy DP11 also seek to ensure that appropriate amenity levels, including play space and quality of residential accommodation is provided. As set out below, acceptable residential quality would be provided within the proposed development.

#### *Space standards*

163. All of the residential units would meet the internal space, external private amenity standards and floor to ceiling heights set out within London Plan Policy D6.

#### *Aspect*

164. The north-south orientation of the building form allows for flats with an east or west orientation, helping to achieve comfortable and liveable internal environments. The proposal achieves approximately 70% dual aspect provision

which is considered an acceptable design response for the high-density development to achieve suitable site optimisation. Remaining single aspect units are of suitable design quality when considering relevant technical strategies relating to ventilation, daylight and privacy, and overheating, along with outlook. Single aspect units are east or west facing and avoid north only orientation. Whilst there are a small number of single aspect family-sized, 3-bedroom units on Level 24, which typically should be avoided, it is considered that acceptable amenity would be provided overall with the units benefitting from good outlook, private amenity space and long-range views. Overall, the development is considered to accord with London Plan policy D6.

### *Privacy*

165. London Plan policies D3 and D6 and Local Plan policy DP11 require residential developments to provide appropriate privacy measures. The design incorporates suitable horizontal and vertical articulation and window orientation to mitigate direct overlooking between facing units, amenity and circulation space and neighbouring properties with acceptable separation distances for the urban context. Suitable privacy would be provided for future building occupants in accordance with the above policies.

### *Children's play space*

166. London Plan policy S4 seeks to ensure that development proposals include suitable provision for play and recreation, and incorporate good-quality, accessible play provision for all ages, of at least 10 sq.m. per child. Play space provision should be available to all housing tenures to promote social inclusion. The requirement should be based on the GLA Population Yield Calculator. Formal play provision should normally be made on-site, however off-site provision secured by an appropriate financial contribution may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it addresses the needs of existing residents of the development.

167. Based on the GLA benchmark of 10 sq.m. per child, this equates to the provision of 400.5 sq.m. for the proposed development. The applicant proposes 224 sq.m. of play space provision for ages 0-4 on-site, made up of dedicated play areas along Sedgemere Road and on the terrace on the seventh floor. Due to the constrained nature of the site, the remaining playspace requirement for the 5-11 and 12+ age groups would be addressed via a proportionate financial contribution towards improvements to local play space facilities. Off-site play areas in proximity of the site have been identified in this instance and GLA officers are accepting of this approach. Further details of on-site play provision have been secured. Overall, GLA officers consider the proposal complies with London Plan Policy S4.

### Accessibility and inclusive design

168. In line with London Plan policy D7, 10 per cent of dwellings (23 units) would meet Building Regulation requirement M4(3) 'wheelchair user dwellings with all other dwellings meeting Building Regulation requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings. It is proposed that the M4(3) units would be distributed

throughout the building. Compliance and further design details would be secured through planning condition. The proposal would incorporate several measures to create an inclusive environment throughout the site and building, including blue-badge parking, step-free access and provision of evacuation lifts in accordance with London Plan policy D5.

### Secured by Design

169. London Plan policy D11 relates to safety, security and resilience to emergency. This policy requires new development to provide legible, convenient and well-maintained movement routes and spaces which are well-overlooked and benefit from an appropriate level of activity, with private and communal spaces clearly defined to promote a sense of ownership. Local Plan policy DP11 also seeks to apply the principles of designing out crime.
170. The Metropolitan Police Designing Out Crime Officer have reviewed the proposed development and have advised that this development could and should achieve Secured by Design accreditation. It was further recommended that this is best achieved with a Secured by Design planning condition which would be secured. The proposal is considered acceptable in response to the above policies.

### Fire safety

171. Policy D12 of the London Plan requires development proposals to achieve the highest standards of fire safety. Policy D5(B5) of the London Plan states that new development should be designed to incorporate safe and dignified emergency evacuation for all building users.
172. The applicant has submitted a Planning Fire Strategy Report by Jensen Hughes which includes a Fire Statement to show how the requirements of the London Plan have been considered and addressed. Information has been provided regarding the qualifications of the assessor. The submitted fire statement has been prepared to address D12 (A) and (B) of the London Plan, along with Policy D5(B5) relating to evacuation lifts. It is noted that all residential levels are served by at least two stair cores. Evacuation lifts have also been included in line with Policy D5.
173. As a qualifying building, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have also been consulted and have issued a "content" response, confirmed that following review of the information provided in the planning application, HSE is content with the fire safety design to the extent it affects land use planning considerations. Supplementary points have been raised by the HSE which require further resolution at later regulatory approval stages, however from a planning perspective, the development is acceptable.
174. In summary, the development would comply with London Plan policy D5 and D12. Compliance with the Planning Fire Strategy Report would be secured through planning condition.

## Conclusion on urban design

175. In summary, the development is considered to be largely in accordance with relevant design policy requirements. Whilst partial conflicts are identified to London Plan policy D9(B) and Local Plan policy DP12 relating to tall building locational criteria, the overall the design is considered to be acceptable in response to the surrounding context and emerging character. The development would be of a high-quality design in line with the wider design policy requirements of the London Plan and Local Plan policies SP5 and DP11, has been subject to acceptable design scrutiny and would deliver suitable optimisation of the highly accessible site within the Sustainable Development Location and Opportunity Area.

## **Heritage**

176. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory duties for dealing with heritage assets in planning decisions. In relation to listed buildings, all planning decisions should “have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses” and, in relation to conservation areas, special attention must be paid to “the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.
177. Paragraph 8(c) of the NPPF identifies the protection and enhancement of the historic environment amongst the overarching environmental objectives necessary for the delivery of sustainable development.
178. The NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance is the value of the heritage asset because of its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic, and may derive from a heritage asset’s physical presence or its setting. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Where a proposed development will lead to ‘substantial harm’ or total loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Where a development will lead to ‘less than substantial harm’, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The effect of development on the significance of any non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account. In weighing applications that affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to any harm or loss of significance to the asset.
179. London Plan policy HC1 states that “development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets’ significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development

on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.”

180. London Plan policy D3 requires development proposals to respond to the existing character of a place and respect, enhance and utilise the heritage assets that contribute towards local character.
181. London Plan policy D9 requires development proposals for tall buildings to take account of and avoid harm to London’s heritage assets and their settings and requires clear and convincing justification for any harm, and demonstration that alternatives have been explored and that clear public benefits outweigh that harm.
182. Bexley Local Plan policies SP6 and DP14 seek to manage Bexley’s heritage assets including development affecting heritage assets. Bexley Local Plan Policy DP12 (Tall buildings and building heights) also sets out that tall building proposals should not have an unacceptable adverse impact on local character, including heritage assets.
183. The application site does not contain any heritage assets, nor is it located in a conservation area. The development would, however fall within the setting of the Lesnes Abbey ruins which are situated approximately 500 metres from the site to the southeast, which is designated as both a Scheduled Ancient Monument (remains below ground) and a listed building (remains above ground are listed as Grade II). GLA officers do not consider that the proposal would adversely impact the setting or significance of any other designated or non-designated heritage assets.
184. Lesnes Abbey consists of exposed wall bases and lower parts of the walls of a ruined medieval abbey, excavated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and left exposed in situ. The archaeological aspects of the site are protected by its Scheduled Monument status and the upstanding elements as a Grade II listed building. The abbey ruins are experienced in an open, park-like setting, backed to the south by woodland.
185. Historic England in their consultation response set out the following –

*“Lesnes Abbey is an outstanding survival of a medieval monastery and provides a very rare example of plan form and built fabric within London. It is located on the slope of Abbey Wood and enjoys views down towards the river, with which the Abbey would have had a functional relationship, for transporting goods and people. The Abbey has strong evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal significance, and is situated within tranquil and well maintained grounds. The views from within the ruins are extensive and, until recently, largely uninterrupted, creating a superb environment for public enjoyment and interpretation about the past history of Abbey Wood.*

*Because of these wide views, and the importance of the abbey’s connection with the river Thames, we have consistently raised concerns about the scale*

*and height of tall building developments proposed in this area of Bexley. This is a relationship which is increasingly compromised by the encroachment and compendium of tall development in the Abbey Wood area.”*

186. Historic England have advised that the proposal is highly visible in views from within and across the Lesnes Abbey site and have concluded that the that the level of harm, in NPPF terms, is on the lower end of ‘less than substantial’. It is noted that Historic England have suggested that some of this harm could be balanced through ensuring that the scheme provides capacity to improve facilities, presentation and maintenance of both the Abbey remains and landscape. In this case a financial contribution towards this purpose has not been secured and planning obligations to mitigate the impact of the development is discussed later on in this report. Bexley officers have also determined that the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm (extent not stated) to the setting of Lesnes Abbey ruins.
187. The proposal would be taller and more prominent than existing and emerging development. This creates a degree of harm to the setting of the abbey ruins, detracting from the appreciation of the asset in its open setting and tending to further erode the visual relationship between the Abbey and the river. Whilst it is noted that this proposal will remain prominent in the cumulative scenario with other consented schemes, GLA officers consider that the harm to the setting and significance of Lesnes Abbey caused by the proposed development and based on the cumulative scenario would be at the lower end of the less than substantial scale, which accords with the view expressed by Historic England.

#### Conclusion of heritage impacts

188. The proposed development is considered to cause some less than substantial harm (at the lower end of the scale) to the setting and significance of Lesnes Abbey, Scheduled Monument and Ruins of Lesnes Abbey. This results in some conflict with London Plan policy HC1 and policies SP6 and DP14 of Bexley’s Local Plan. Officers attribute great weight to the less than substantial harm to Lesnes Abbey. Whilst the heritage impacts give rise to some conflict with London and Local Plan policy requirements, national policy provides for a balancing exercise in which the less than substantial harm to heritage assets is weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. It is considered that the heritage harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposed development, which is also discussed within the conclusion of this report.

#### Archaeology

189. London Plan policy HC1 and Local Plan policies SP6 and DP14 require identification, recording and protection of archaeological sites. The application site is located within the Thamesmead and Erith Marshes Tier 3 Archaeological Priority Area and an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment accompanies the application. The Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) advised that the development could cause harm to archaeological remains and recommended a condition that secures the submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) allowing for appropriate field evaluation and mitigation to

safeguard the archaeological interest on the site. Accordingly, this condition is included within the draft Decision Notice.

## **Amenity impacts**

190. London Plan policies D6 and D9 seek to ensure that developments deliver appropriate privacy and amenity, provide sufficient daylight and sunlight to new and surrounding housing that is appropriate for context and that tall building environmental impacts are carefully considered.
191. In line with London Plan policy D9, the impact of tall buildings on wind, daylight, sunlight penetration and temperature conditions around the building and neighbourhood must be carefully considered. Furthermore, London Plan Policy D14 specifically seeks to reduce and manage noise associated with development.
192. Policies DP11 and DP12 of the Bexley Local Plan requires development proposals to demonstrate that they do not result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. Policy DP11 sets out that appropriate levels of privacy, outlook, natural daylight and other forms of amenity are provided and that existing properties' amenity is appropriately protected. Policy DP12 sets out that unacceptable adverse environmental impacts, including loss or lack of daylight and sunlight must not be created.

## Privacy

193. In line with London Plan policies D6 and D9 and Local Plan policies DP11 and DP12, GLA officers are satisfied that the proposals would not give rise to an unreasonable loss of privacy or increased levels of overlooking and that a good standard of amenity for surrounding residents would be maintained. The properties to the east of the application site comprise two storey residential buildings with rear gardens. The proposed development incorporates a setback from Sedgemere Road and from the south-east, providing suitable separation distance from properties to the east. In addition, lower building height is incorporated towards the northern end of the site assisting with the transition in scale between the tall building and its surrounding context. The design and positioning of fenestration further limits direct views and inter visibility into habitable rooms or private rear gardens. Properties that are not immediately adjacent are separated by intervening buildings, boundary treatments, and access roads.
194. Overall, the proposed development would not introduce unacceptable loss of privacy for residents of surrounding properties. It is considered that any impacts would remain typical of an urban setting. In summary, the scheme accords with policies D6, D9, DP11 and DP12 in respect of its privacy impacts.

## Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing

195. Guidance relating to daylight, sunlight and overshadowing is contained within the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight & Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice 3rd edition (2022)'.
196. The application is accompanied by a Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment which GLA officers note has also been reviewed by an independent consultant on behalf of Bexley Council.
197. The NPPF sets out, within the context of achieving site optimisation and appropriate densities, that when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards). In this case the site is within a location where intensification is envisioned, supporting a context-based approach to assessment of daylight and sunlight.
198. The existing site context generally allows for the surrounding properties to benefit from very good levels of daylight and sunlight in the existing condition. As a result, any meaningful development on the site could lead to greater reductions and impacts outside of the BRE guidance, however that would not necessarily leave residents with unacceptable retained levels of daylight and sunlight within the urban context.
199. The independent assessment carried out for the Council identified that the majority of neighbouring buildings (14 out of 17) considered for daylight and sunlight analysis would experience either negligible (BRE compliant) or minor-adverse reductions overall in daylight or sunlight (in instances where BRE criteria was not achieved). Contextual considerations such as existing architectural features on neighbouring buildings such as balconies, dual aspect layouts providing mitigation and room use assumptions were considered by the independent assessor in determining overall significance of impact, along with the magnitude of reductions and the margin of any discrepancy with BRE criteria within the urban context. GLA officers are satisfied the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts on these properties having considered the minor extent of impacts and relevant contextual matters described above.

### *Impacts to 7 and 9 Sedgemere Road, 13 Sydney Road*

200. The independent assessment identified that three properties (7 Sedgemere Road, 9 Sedgemere Road and 13 Sydney Road) would experience greater impacts, with minor-moderate adverse effects for daylight reduction. Sunlight levels would remain relatively good with either negligible, or minor-adverse effects identified. Sunlight to back gardens or amenity spaces would be in line with BRE criteria.
201. Officers have considered the minor to moderate adverse daylight effects and whilst higher magnitude reductions are identified, the neighbouring windows for these properties experience high daylight levels for the urban location in the

existing scenario. Following implementation of the development, it is considered that reasonable daylight levels would be retained for the urban location. Each of the properties also benefit from an aspect that does not face the development site and therefore not all of the property will be affected. It is also noted that some of the higher magnitude impacts would impact windows serving bedrooms, which typically have a lower requirement for daylight. Overall, GLA officers do not consider that the proposed development would result in unacceptable impacts on occupant living conditions for these properties.

#### *Additional properties tested*

202. In response to a request from the Council's consultant, the applicant submitted a supplementary daylight and sunlight review in relation to two additional neighbouring locations 2, 4 & 6 Overton Road and 140 Felixstowe Road / 1 Chantry Close. The proposed development would not, however, result in any unacceptable impacts to daylight performance for these properties, when also considering impacts attributable to architectural features on the existing buildings along with the urban setting. These properties would retain good levels of sunlight access.

#### *Overshadowing*

203. In terms of sunlight to neighbouring amenity spaces, the overshadowing assessment demonstrates that all amenity spaces would accord with BRE guidance, which requires that at least 50% of each amenity area should receive two hours of sunlight on 21 March. No significant overshadowing effects were identified.

#### *Daylight and sunlight internal performance*

204. The application is supported by an Internal Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Report which GLA officers note was also reviewed by the external reviewer on behalf of the Council.

205. 553 (90%) of the 616 habitable residential rooms will satisfy or exceed the minimum recommended daylight illuminance targets. When applying a lower threshold of 150 lux for living/kitchen/dining rooms (LKDs), compliance increases to 584 rooms (95%). The rooms not meeting the targets achieve between 78-148 lux and are set back behind balconies, which naturally inhibit the access of daylight although this does provide private amenity space delivering functional amenity benefits.

206. 227 (99%) of the 228 units would satisfy or exceed the recommended sunlight exposure target, with 215 units achieving the recommendation within the main living space. The single unit that does not meet the guideline would only marginally fall below sunlight targets with 76–81 minutes of sunlight against a 90-minute target.

207. The proposed amenity spaces within the development will benefit from adequate levels of sunlight. The results of the two-hours sun-on-ground

assessment confirmed that all proposed external amenity areas meet the BRE requirement that at least 50% of their area receives a minimum of two hours of sunlight on 21 March (spring equinox).

208. Overall, the development would provide a very good level of adherence to daylight and sunlight guidelines with deviations limited in scale and impact. The overall quality of the accommodation has also been balanced including the high proportion of dual aspect units, and the provision of adequate internal and external amenity. The proposed internal daylight and sunlight levels are considered acceptable in response to relevant policy and guidance.

### *Conclusion*

209. In summary, whilst the development would result in some breaches to BRE guidelines, the proposed development would not result in unacceptable impacts on the daylight or sunlight amenity for occupiers of neighbouring properties. Acceptable overall quality of living accommodation of neighbouring properties would be maintained. The submitted Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment has also been independently reviewed on behalf of the Council. The proposal is considered in line with London Plan policies D6 and D9, Local Plan policies DP11 and DP12 and the NPPF in respect of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing.

### Wind microclimate

210. A Pedestrian Level Wind Microclimate Assessment accompanies the planning application, which includes an assessment of the baseline condition, the proposals in the existing and cumulative scenarios, along with scenarios incorporating landscaping and mitigation measures.
211. Following introduction of the proposed development, wind conditions would become slightly windier than those in existing scenario. There were identified areas within the central pedestrian passageway of the building which experienced conditions that exceeded both comfort and safety thresholds. In addition, amenity areas at ground and elevated levels were found to exceed the comfort criteria for their intended use, including one off site location (an entrance to the adjacent Sainsbury's store).
212. Following testing of the proposed development with a suite of mitigation measures, including built interventions such as full height solid screens, canopies, and 1.5m high planting, alongside a revised landscaping strategy, the assessment concluded that all on site locations would meet the comfort and safety criteria for their intended uses. There would be no on or off-site occurrences exceeding the safety threshold. A single off-site entrance to the west of the site would have wind conditions marginally windier than suitable (exceeding the strolling conditions threshold by 5.03%), which would be suitable for the majority of the time throughout the year. No mitigations were determined to be necessary. Considering the limited nature and frequency of this exceedance, it is not considered that this would be materially harmful to pedestrian comfort.

213. The proposed development is considered to align with relevant policies requiring demonstration of acceptable wind comfort and safety conditions. A planning condition is also included in the draft Decision Notice to submit updated details to ensure wind microclimate conditions reflecting the final detailed design of the development.

#### Other amenity impacts - noise, vibration, odour, emissions and light pollution

214. London Plan policy D14 sets out measures to be employed in development proposals to reduce, manage and mitigate noise. London Plan policies D9(C) and D6 seek to minimise light pollution from development lighting. London Plan policy SI1 seeks to manage air quality impacts.

215. Local Plan policy DP11 sets out that the development proposals ensure that all proposed development and uses do not result in unacceptable noise, odour, vibration, light spill or other disturbances. Local Plan policy D26 (waste management in new development) also sets out that for new flatted development measures are incorporated to manage, to acceptable levels, impacts on amenity including those that may be caused by odour, noise, and dust.

216. In terms of noise, a Stage 3 Acoustic Planning Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The report includes a detailed baseline environmental noise survey at multiple positions across the site. Road traffic constitutes the dominant source of noise affecting the site and noise levels were found to be highest on the western façade of the site facing Harrow Manorway with lower levels were recorded on the eastern façade. The report concludes that internal noise levels consistent with BS 8233:2014 and Professional Practice Guidance on Planning & Noise can be achieved with appropriate façade insulation, including enhanced glazing specifications. Where external noise levels are higher, standard double glazing will not be sufficient and as openable windows cannot be relied upon as a sole strategy for overheating mitigation, a combination of acoustically attenuated mechanical ventilation and façade treatments are proposed.

217. With respect to external amenity areas, the assessment shows that some ground level spaces on the west side of the development are predicted to exceed the upper guideline value for outdoor areas. Upper floor terraces and spaces facing Sedgemere Road are expected to remain within or close to the recommended range consistent with BS 8233:2014, which recognises that achieving such levels in urban settings may not always be feasible and a degree of flexibility is warranted. The report also includes an initial assessment of fixed plant noise.

218. The Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has reviewed the application proposals and has determined that the Acoustic Planning Assessment methodologies, recommendations and conclusions are considered acceptable. Furthermore, the EHO has recommended that the mitigations identified in the assessment should be sufficient to achieve the criteria specified in BS 8233:2014, subject to planning conditions.

219. Several planning conditions have been recommended by the EHO relating to noise and wider amenity impacts including odour and emissions, including:
- Requiring the applicant to submit finalised details of noise attenuation measures (glazing, acoustically attenuated ventilation and external balcony soffit treatments) through submission of a detailed Stage 4 Acoustic Report to ensure adequate noise levels for all new residential dwellings;
  - Details of opening hours for the ground floor commercial units;
  - Submission of a detailed acoustic report which considers the noise levels of external mechanical plant and equipment;
  - Demolition/construction noise and emissions;
  - Details of commercial extraction ventilation.
220. The above conditions would be included in the Decision Notice to manage amenity impacts relating to noise, odour and demolition/construction stage emissions and dust. In addition, the Environmental Health Officer indicated that the external lighting details submitted with the application would be considered satisfactory to ensure different areas of the site are lit appropriately whilst managing light spill and glare to surrounding residential properties. Final lighting details to reflect the detailed design proposals would also be secured through planning condition.

#### Amenity conclusion

221. GLA officers consider that subject to conditions, the development would not give rise to unacceptable amenity impacts during construction or operation of the development and therefore is in line with London Plan policies D6, D9, D14, Local Plan policies DP11 and DP12 and the NPPF in respect of amenity impacts.

## **Sustainability, environment and climate change**

#### Flood risk management

222. London Plan policy SI12 sets out that development proposals should ensure that flood risk is minimised and mitigated, and that residual risk is addressed. London Plan policy SI13 also sets out policies to manage surface water run-off.
223. Local Plan policy SP14 (Mitigating and adapting to climate change) states that the Council will actively pursue the delivery of sustainable development and lists the ways in which this will be achieved. These include applying the recommendations of Bexley's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, and Integrated Water Management Strategy, directing new development into the most sustainable locations by applying the flood risk sequential test and following the sequential approach to flood risk management advocated in national planning policy and its associated practice guidance.

224. Local Plan policy DP32 (Flood risk management) sets out detailed criteria for the management of flood risk in developments in areas identified as being at risk of flooding in the Bexley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Policy DP32 states that development must not increase flood risk on-site or off-site. Local Plan policy DP33 sets out requirements for management of surface water drainage in order to minimise flood risk.
225. Policy DP32 also states that in areas at risk of flooding development proposals must be within a Sustainable Development Location or the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area if the site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3a, and the development type is acceptable within the flood zone, as only these locations have passed the Local Plan sequential test. Policy DP32 goes on to state that the exception test is to be applied, where required, to sites within Flood Zones 2 and 3a that have met the requirements set out above
226. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The NPPF sets out that planning applications follow a sequential, risk-based approach.
227. The proposal is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) which confirms that the site lies within Flood Zone 3 in an area benefitting from flood defences. There is a residual risk from tidal breach and a medium risk of groundwater flooding. All other sources of flood risk are considered low.
228. The site forms part of the Abbey Wood and South Thamesmead Opportunity Area and also lies within a Sustainable Development Location. The Opportunity Area and Sustainable Development Location passed the Sequential Test at the plan-making stage. There are no reasonably available sites of comparable size and suitability in areas of lower flood risk that could accommodate the proposed development.
229. The Environment Agency raised no objection subject to a condition requiring that the first-floor finished floor level be set above the tidal breach level. A Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan (FWEP) has also been prepared to support emergency planning measures.
230. The site is within a strategically allocated growth area, no alternative sites at lower risk are available, and the development incorporates suitable mitigation measures. Overall, the Sequential Test is passed.
231. In line with the NPPF, as the proposed use is recognised in the guidance associated with the NPPF as “more vulnerable” development, the Exception Test is also required and must also be satisfied for development to be permitted. The Exception Test comprises two parts:
- a) the development must provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and

- b) it must be demonstrated, through a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment, that the development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.
232. In relation to part (a) of the Exception Test, the development would contribute to the delivery of new housing within a designated Opportunity Area and Sustainable Development Location, supporting strategic growth objectives outlined in both the London Plan and Bexley Local Plan. It would optimise the use of a brownfield site in a highly accessible location, contribute to housing delivery targets, and support regeneration objectives for Abbey Wood and South Thamesmead. These are considered to be wider sustainability benefits to the community.
233. In relation to part (b), the submitted Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the development incorporates a range of flood mitigation measures including raised finished floor levels for all habitable accommodation above the breach flood level, use of flood-resilient construction techniques, and the implementation of a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan.
234. The Drainage Strategy has also been revised to discharge surface water into a foul sewer located in Harrow Manorway, following an extensive sequential review of alternative discharge locations as described in the following section of this report.
235. The Lead Local Flood Authority have objected to the development, identifying conflicts with planning policy and that the development must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding. However, no evidence has been provided to suggest that this specific scheme would result in increased sewer flood risk. The site currently discharges on-site foul and surface water drainage to the foul network and primarily to a smaller foul network sewer on Sedgemere Road at an unrestricted rate. The application proposes to connect directly to a larger foul sewer situated directly under Harrow Manorway. Whilst foul flows from the development would increase due to the much larger scale of development, the applicant's calculations identify that there would be an overall reduction in flows to the surrounding foul networks in the area against the existing discharges.
236. In addition, GLA officers consider that the development would maximise on-site sustainable drainage and attenuation measures in achieving significant reductions identified to the existing surface water discharge rate. The discharge to the network has been reduced over the course of the application to align with the rate of 1l/s requested by Thames Water in their pre-development enquiry response. Thames Water in their consultation response to the application have no objection to the proposals, provided that evidence to show the sequential approach has been followed (discussed below), and that a pre-occupation condition is secured requiring network reinforcement or upgrades, if required. A planning condition would be secured, thereby responding to capacity comments relating to the specific sewer connection proposed. Thames Water have also identified that they have no objection relating to foul water network capacity.

237. For the reasons above and subject to measures secured, the development is considered to be acceptable without increasing flood risk elsewhere. It is considered that the exceptions test is met and that the proposed development would not conflict with London Plan policy SI12 or Local Plan policy DP32 in relation to flood risk management.

### Drainage strategy

238. London Plan policy SI13 states that development proposals should aim to achieve greenfield run off rates and ensure that surface water run-off is managed as close to its source as possible and that there should also be a preference for green over grey features, in line with the following drainage hierarchy:

- 1) *rainwater use as a resource (for example rainwater harvesting, blue roofs for irrigation)*
- 2) *rainwater infiltration to ground at or close to source*
- 3) *rainwater attenuation in green infrastructure features for gradual release (for example green roofs, rain gardens)*
- 4) *rainwater discharge direct to a watercourse (unless not appropriate)*
- 5) *controlled rainwater discharge to a surface water sewer or drain*
- 6) *controlled rainwater discharge to a combined sewer.*

239. Local Plan policy DP33 states that all development proposals, whether increasing or decreasing the impermeable area of the site, will be required to manage surface water through sustainable drainage systems in line with all national, regional and local policies and related guidance, in order to minimise flood risk, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity and amenity. Part 2 of the policy requires the following to be demonstrated in all development proposals:

- a) *the drainage for the site achieves greenfield runoff rates for flood events up to and including 1 in 100 years plus 40% climate change;*
- b) *surface water run off has been reduced by sustainably managing run off on site;*
- c) *permeable paving has been used for hardstanding areas (e.g. car parks);*
- d) *the nature of water flow (both surface water and groundwater) across a steeply sloping site has been considered in order to provide suitable SuDS; and,*
- e) *water reuse mechanisms have been included for either indoor or outdoor purposes*

240. London Plan policy SI5 states that development proposals should take action to minimise the potential for misconnections between foul and surface water networks.

241. Supporting text to policy DP33 sets out that it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul

sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding. Similarly, supporting text to London Plan policy SI5 (water infrastructure) states that surface water being misconnected into the foul system creates sewer capacity issues within sewers and at sewage treatment works. Development proposals should therefore take action to minimise the potential for misconnections.

242. The applicant's drainage strategy has been revised over the course of the application. Proposals to connect to the surface water sewer in Lensbury Way to the north, which eventually discharges into Southmere Lake was refused by Bexley officers due to capacity issues with the surface water network. Bexley's Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) considered that discharge to the surface water sewer on Lensbury Way would increase flood risk to neighbouring areas.
243. Following the Mayor's decision to take over the application for his determination, GLA officers held a meeting with the LLFA relating to the identified issues with the surrounding surface water network and to discuss potential alternative discharge locations. Issues faced within the borough with the surrounding drained marshland area and resulting challenges for sustainable drainage and flood risk management were identified, resulting in capacity constraints impacting surrounding surface water networks. This raises issues with the practicality of off-site options involving connections to alternative existing surface water networks which are understood to have capacity issues, some of which may also involve installation of pumping systems to pump surface water at varying distances through the highway.
244. Following further discussions with the applicant, an updated Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy was submitted. The drainage strategy has been revised to revert to the original location, discharging via gravity to the circa 950mm diameter (at the point of connection) foul sewer under Harrow Manorway, however at an improved discharge rate of 1 l/s for the site (compared to 2 l/s originally proposed) to align with the requested rate specified by Thames Water in their pre-development enquiry response. As discussed above, the applicant's drainage strategy identifies that a betterment in surface water runoff would be achieved to the surrounding foul networks within the area when compared to the existing unrestricted discharge, along with an overall reduction in flows when accounting for both proposed foul and surface water.
245. The drainage strategy for the proposed development includes a range of Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) measures, including blue/green roofs, permeable paving, an attenuation tank, rain garden features and water butts for passive rainwater reuse. This multi-faceted approach is welcomed and aligns with the aims of London Plan policy SI13, which seeks to ensure surface water is managed as close to its source as possible using the drainage hierarchy. Whilst the development is expected to exceed the greenfield rate required in Local Plan policy SP33, it is considered that on-site measures have been maximised with the drainage strategy designed to achieve 1 l/s for up to the 100-year flood event plus an allowance of 40% for climate change, GLA officers are satisfied that the proposed development has maximised on-site measures as far as possible which aligns with the London Plan requirement to aim to achieve greenfield run-off rates and ensure that surface water run-off is

managed as close to its source as possible. Final details of the SuDS and attenuation features would be secured via planning condition to ensure that the specified discharge rate is achieved along with maintenance requirements.

246. Connection to the foul sewer on Harrow Manorway would conflict with Bexley Local Plan policy DP33, associated guidance, the London Plan SuDS hierarchy within policy SI13 and the Government's non-statutory National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems. GLA officers also recognise that new development can provide an opportunity to remove surface water from this system, as encouraged by London Plan policy SI5 and in line with wider strategies by Thames Water. In this case, however, it is considered that there are site specific circumstances and constraints which mean that this is impracticable.
247. Engagement with the LLFA has been carried out and whilst a continued objection is received, GLA officers consider that utilisation of higher priority destinations have been sufficiently explored through the applicant's drainage strategy and when also accounting for officer engagement with the LLFA which has identified wider issues with alternative discharge locations. The LLFA have further identified that there is not the infrastructure capacity to cope with new development in this area. GLA officers do not consider that there are practicable alternative discharge connections to the surface water networks at the current time. It is considered that the sequential approach to surface water management has been reasonably followed in these circumstances.
248. Furthermore, the planning condition requested by Thames Water would be imposed requiring network reinforcement upgrades or development phasing (if required). The development would move surface water at a reduced rate to the surrounding foul networks (compared to existing) directly to a larger Thames Water sewer which, although designated as foul, also appears to connect with extensive surface and combined flows upstream within the Royal Borough of Greenwich. It appears that this sewer may then directly link with the major cross-London Southern Outfall Sewer which takes in extensive combined flows to Crossness Sewage Treatment Works. Although overflows discharging directly into the River Thames continues to be an issue, this may enable the removal of flows from the catchment utilising larger infrastructure than the existing network on Sedgemere Road. In addition, given the size of this site, the total attenuation volume is limited, and the scheme is expected based on the applicant's calculations to provide an overall betterment from existing discharges to the local foul networks. It is not considered that this specific development would increase local flood risk.
249. Overall, whilst it is recognised that surface water connection to the foul network is not a desirable solution, in these specific circumstances it is considered that the proposed drainage strategy should be accepted. It is considered that on-site measures to reduce the discharge rate have been maximised and that alternative surface water discharge locations have been sufficiently considered and discounted as discussed above. GLA officers do not consider that additional flood risk would result from the proposed drainage strategy. As such, GLA officers recognise that whilst the drainage strategy conflicts with Local Plan policy DP33 and policy SI13 of the London Plan, accept that the

proposed drainage strategy, when balanced against the delivery of the site and a significant number of new homes within the highly accessible location to meet wider growth policy aspirations, is acceptable.

#### Water re-use and consumption

250. To ensure compliance with London Plan policy SI5 and Local Plan policy DP30, planning conditions would secure that the residential development achieves a maximum water use of 105 litres per person per day (excluding allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption) and that the non-residential element of the development hereby approved shall achieve at least the BREEAM excellent standard for the 'Wat 01' water category.
251. The proposed use of water butts connected to roof downpipes is accepted as a low-impact form of rainwater reuse and is appropriate in this context with site constraints identified. Their inclusion demonstrates an intention to reduce mains water demand and provide water quantity and irrigation benefits in line with the wider objectives of policies SI13 and SI5.

#### Energy strategy

252. The London Plan requires all major developments to meet a net-zero carbon target. Reductions in carbon emissions beyond Part L of the 2021 Building Regulations should be met on-site. Only where it is clearly demonstrated that the zero-carbon target cannot be fully achieved on-site a contribution to a carbon offset fund or reductions provided off site should be considered.
253. Policy SI2 sets out that a minimum 35% reduction should be achieved on site (with at least 10% for residential and 15% for non-residential coming from energy efficiency measures), in accordance with the energy hierarchy. London Plan policy SI 3 requires development within Heat Network Priority Areas to have communal-low temperature heating system, with heat source being selected in accordance with a hierarchy (connect to heat networks, use zero carbon or local heat sources (in conjunction with heat pumps, if required), use low-emission CHP).
254. Local Plan policy SP14 (Mitigating and adapting to climate change) sets out the ways in which the Council will pursue the delivery of sustainable development. Local Plan policy DP30 (Mitigating climate change) states that major development proposals must meet London Plan requirements in relation to energy.
255. Overall, the proposed development is estimated to achieve a reduction of 49% against the building regulations baseline which meets the minimum on-site requirement set by Policy SI2. For the domestic element, the development is estimated to achieve a 50% reduction in CO2 emissions compared to 2021 Building Regulations. For the non-domestic element, a 19% reduction is expected with this element therefore falling short of the minimum target. As the development falls short of the net zero-carbon target in Policy SI2, a carbon

offset payment (currently £275,595) would be secured through s106 agreement.

256. The scheme has been scrutinised by GLA energy officers in order to maximise on-site energy savings and is acceptable. GLA officers consider that at this stage, energy efficiency measures have been maximised in line with the Be Lean stage of the hierarchy. The development is projected to meet energy efficiency targets with 15% (domestic) and 17% (non-domestic) reductions calculated.
257. Heat pumps are being proposed in the form of a (centralised) Air Source Heat Pump system for space heating and domestic hot water in residential units, and independent Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) systems in the non-residential space. It is noted that the applicant is not currently proposing to install any solar panels across the development and has outlined challenges with incorporating roof mounted PV. GLA officers have secured a feasibility study to fully demonstrate whether PV panels can be installed by condition. Overall, GLA officers having reviewed detailed technical responses from the applicant team are satisfied that measures are in place to ensure that on-site carbon reductions will be maximised in line with policy requirements.
258. Whilst there are currently no District Heating Networks operating in proximity to the site, correspondence provided with network operators confirms that there could be potential for immediate connection to the planned Riverside Heat Network. Accordingly, measures would be secured in the s106 agreement to demonstrate that connection opportunities have been pursued in line with the energy hierarchy. The development would otherwise be designed to be future proofed for connection.
259. Be Seen energy monitoring obligations would also be secured. In conclusion, the energy strategy is considered acceptable in response to relevant policy requirements and incorporates appropriate mechanisms for carbon mitigation.
260. Overall, with suitable measures to be secured the Energy Strategy would be in accordance with London Plan policies SI2, SI3 and Local Plan policies SP14 and DP30.

#### Sustainable design standards

261. Local Plan policy DP30 (Mitigating climate change) states that the Council expects that, where possible new homes be designed to achieve BREEAM Home Quality Mark (HQM), BREEAM Communities standards (for major housing led mixed use development), Passivhaus, or other appropriate sustainability measures. It further states that minor non-residential development achieves a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating.
262. The non-residential units within the development hereby approved are expected to achieve compliance with at least the 'Very Good' BREEAM standard. It is considered that the residential element proposed development incorporates appropriate sustainability measures and would accord with Policy DP30.

## Overheating

263. London Plan policy SI4 requires major developments to minimise the risk of internal overheating and reliance on active cooling systems. GLA officers have scrutinised the applicant's overheating strategy which is compliant with the requirements of Policy SI4.
264. The methodology for the residential element follows CIBSE Technical Memorandum 59 (TM59) and Approved Document Part O and demonstrate that all sample units comply with the DSY1 climate file to simulate summer overheating conditions. In accordance with the London Plan cooling hierarchy, the applicant has demonstrated that passive design measures have been incorporated and where feasible natural ventilation is provided. Mechanical ventilation systems with heat recovery (MVHR) is also required due to contextual constraints, however an enhanced MVHR systems with trim cooling is proposed. Over the course of the application, the applicant has provided further information on the MVHR trim cooling arrangement along with cooling demand for the non-residential element. Overall, the application is in accordance with Policy SI4.

## Whole life-cycle carbon

265. London Plan policy SI2 requires developments referable to the Mayor to include a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Assessment and demonstrate actions taken to reduce life-cycle carbon emissions. The application is supported by a WLC assessment and a completed version of the GLA's WLC template. The WLC Assessment has been scrutinised by GLA officers and has been found to be acceptable. Estimated WLC emissions for the A1-5 and B-C modules are within what is expected of a development of this nature. It is noted that the A1-5 module meets the WLC benchmark, although falls short of the aspirational benchmark. B-C module emissions exceed benchmarks, although reasonable explanation has been provided. In line with London Plan guidance the assessment sets out key actions and further opportunities to reduce whole life-cycle carbon emissions.
266. Overall, the WLC Assessment meets the requirements of Policy SI2 and is of acceptable quality. A condition is secured requiring the submission of a post-construction assessment to report on the development's actual WLC emissions.

## Circular economy

267. London Plan policy SI7 requires development applications that are referable to the Mayor of London to submit a Circular Economy Statement, whilst London Plan policy D3 requires development proposals to integrate circular economy principles as part of the design process.
268. The application is supported by a Circular Economy Statement and GLA template. The applicant has provided detailed technical responses to GLA officers over the course of the application and the statement is considered satisfactory in response to London Plan Policy SI7 with further operational

waste detailed information to be secured via planning condition. An updated Demolition and Construction Site Waste Management Plan would also be secured, along with the submission of post-construction monitoring requirements.

269. Subject to details secured by condition, the development would comply with policy SI7 of the London Plan. At the local level, the proposal would also be consistent with Bexley Local Plan policies, including SP1 (Achieving Sustainable Development), DP26 (Waste Management in New Developments), and SP12 (Sustainable Waste Management).

#### Digital connectivity

270. In accordance with London Plan policy SI6, a planning condition would ensure that sufficient ducting space for full fibre connectivity infrastructure is provided within the development.

#### Land contamination

271. The application is supported by a Geotechnical and Geo Environmental Desk Study which identifies potential contamination risks associated with both the current and historical land uses on the site. The Council's Contaminated Land Officer has reviewed the submitted Phase 1 and has raised no objection to the proposed development, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning condition to confirm the nature and extent of contamination and to inform any necessary remediation strategy. Accordingly, this planning condition requiring the submission and approval of a detailed site investigation, a remediation strategy if required, and a subsequent verification report would be secured to ensure compliance with Local Plan policy DP28 and the NPPF.

#### Air quality

272. London Plan policy SI1 states that development proposals should not create unacceptable risk of high levels of exposure to poor air quality and should ensure design solutions are incorporated to prevent or minimise increased exposure to existing air pollution. Local Plan policies DP11 and SP8 also promote design measures to improve air quality.
273. The application site lies within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), designated by the London Borough of Bexley due to elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM).
274. A detailed Air Quality Assessment has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer who has advised that the report was carried out in accordance with accepted methodologies. Both the construction and operational air quality impacts of the development are not judged to be significant when determined in accordance with recognised assessment criteria. Given the all-electric energy strategy to provide hot water and heating the proposals have been shown to meet the London Plan's requirement that new developments are at least 'air quality neutral' in respect of building

emissions. The development only provides a total of 7 parking spaces and provides electric vehicle charging infrastructure. It is consequently also considered to be air quality neutral in respect of transport emission benchmarks. The Council's Environmental Health officer has recommended planning conditions relating to construction stage emissions, dust management and Non-Road Mobile Machinery which would be secured.

275. The development proposals are considered acceptable and compliant with relevant air quality policies.

### Urban greening and trees

276. In accordance with London Plan policy G5 and Bexley Local Plan policy DP21, the applicant has submitted Urban Greening Factor (UGF) calculations and an associated plan. The UGF calculation yields a score of 0.46, which exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.4 for major residential-led developments set by both the London Plan and the Local Plan. This score has been achieved through the inclusion of a range of urban greening measures such as green roofs, tree planting, flower rich vegetation, and rain gardens.

277. It is noted that since this plan, a minor reduction in pavement width to accommodate increased pavement width has been incorporated to the north-west of the site, however this is unlikely to impact the ability of the development proposal to meet the minimum target score. Compliance would be secured through planning condition, along with full landscaping details and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) within the s106 agreement. The LEMP must detail the type, quantity, and location of greening features, alongside long-term maintenance and monitoring regimes.

278. An arboricultural survey was undertaken in accordance with BS5837:2012, covering trees on and immediately adjacent to the site. A total of ten individual trees were surveyed (three Category B trees and the remaining Category C) most of which are semi mature and of moderate physiological and structural condition. The development would necessitate the removal of the majority of on site trees, which are primarily Category C. Off-site Category B lime trees are shown to be retained, and no adverse impact on their Root Protection Areas (RPAs) is anticipated, provided appropriate protection measures are implemented during construction. The proposals also include extensive replacement planting, significantly exceeding what is to be removed.

279. Whilst London Plan policy G7 sets out that replacement trees should be based on recognised tree valuation method, it is considered that the development proposal has sought to retain existing trees of value, and that suitable replacement planting is provided including new large canopy trees within the landscape design. Tree protection measures would be secured, along with the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) via the s106 agreement discussed above.

280. Overall, the approach to urban greening and trees is considered acceptable in relation to London Plan and Local Plan policy requirements.

## Ecology and biodiversity

281. London Plan policy G6 states that development proposals should manage impacts on biodiversity and aim to secure net biodiversity gain. Local Plan policy SP9 sets out how the council will protect and enhance the borough's biodiversity and geodiversity assets in line with national and regional policy. Local Plan policy DP20 sets out further criteria for development proposals. A mandatory requirement for major developments to provide a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain came into force on 12 February 2024.
282. The proposals have been reviewed by the Council's ecology officer and found to be acceptable subject to conditions and obligations. The proposed development is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) which confirms that the existing site offers minimal ecological value, however recommends a series of mitigation and enhancement measures intended to support biodiversity. Planning conditions and obligations to ensure delivery, maintenance and monitoring would be secured. Furthermore, a final Construction Environmental Management Plan would be secured via condition which would incorporate the mitigation measures set out in the EclA to ensure ecological protection throughout the construction phase.
283. The applicant has submitted a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment (September 2024). The Assessment outlines the proposed post development habitats, which include introduced trees, shrubs, rain garden and elements of green roofing. The proposed measures are expected to deliver a gain in BNG of 323% in area-based habitat units. This means that the proposed BNG measures would comfortably exceed the 10% mandatory requirement. A verification report confirming that any initial habitat creation works have been implemented would be secured, along with a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan as requested by the Ecology officer.
284. Overall, with measures secured the proposal would be in accordance with relevant policies highlighted above and statutory requirements.

## **Transport**

285. Chapter 9 of the NPPF sets out the Government's aim to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport. When considering the transport implications of development proposals, the NPPF states that decision-makers should ensure that sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location; safe and suitable access to site would be achieved for all users; and any significant impacts from development on transport network (in terms of capacity or congestion) or highways safety can be mitigated to an acceptable degree.
286. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Paragraph 117 of the NPPF sets out additional criteria which should be addressed which includes giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements;

addressing the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility; minimising the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles; allowing the efficient delivery of goods; and allowing for charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

287. London Plan policy T1 (Strategic approach to transport) reflects the Mayor's Transport Strategy insofar as it requires new development to support the strategic target mode share for active travel. Policy T2 (Healthy Streets) sets out where development proposals should demonstrate how they will deliver improvements that support the ten Healthy Streets indicators, reduce the dominance of vehicles on London's streets and be permeable by foot and cycle and connect to local walking and cycling networks as well as public transport. Policy T9 (Funding transport infrastructure through planning) sets out how planning obligations will be sought to mitigate impacts from development, which may include the provision of new and improved public transport services, capacity and infrastructure, and making streets pleasant environments for walking and socialising. Chapter 7 of the London Plan sets out wider transport policies, including those relating to cycle and car parking and deliveries, servicing and construction.
288. The Mayor's Transport Strategy 2018 looks to put people's health and quality of life at the very heart of planning the city's transport with an aim that by 2041, 80 per cent of all Londoners' trips will be made on foot, by cycle or by public transport. Proposal 80 of the Strategy seeks to impose high expectations on developers to deliver transport solutions that will promote sustainable mode shift, reduce road congestion, improve air quality and assist in the development of attractive, healthy and active places.
289. Local Plan policy SP10 sets out broad actions to ensure a much improved and expanded role for sustainable transport. Local Plan policy DP22 sets out measures in all development proposals that facilitate and promote walking, cycling, public transport and shared mobility.
290. Local Plan policies DP23 (parking management) and DP24 (impact of development on the transport network) are also relevant in setting out requirements for car parking based on locational criteria, along with management of impacts on: the delivery, operation or retention of existing and future transport infrastructure; the highway and public transport network; and impacts on the safety of users of the transport network such as pedestrians and cyclists. Improved access to sustainable modes of transport is also promoted.

#### Trip generation, impacts on surrounding highway and transport network

291. The site is located within the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area. Significant public transport investment has taken place within the immediate part of the Opportunity Area, including the Elizabeth line, which was delivered in 2022 and has increased connectivity and capacity, along with the new Superloop bus route SL3.
292. The site benefits from good transport accessibility, with a PTAL rating of 5 (where 6 is scored highest), and is located approximately 150 metres from

Abbey Wood Station, providing services via the Elizabeth Line and National Rail. The site is also served by several bus routes, including night and Superloop services, and lies adjacent to the proposed Thamesmead/Abbey Wood Bus Rapid Transit route.

293. The submitted Transport Assessment (TA) includes estimated figures for the one hour only AM and PM peak of 08:00 – 09:00 and 17:00 – 18:00 and daily figures. The TA states that the proposed residential element of the scheme is estimated to generate 123 total trips in the AM peak hour and 82 total trips in the PM peak hour, 52 and 35 respectively will be rail based, 40 and 27 respectively by bus and 16 and 11 respectively by pedestrians (excluding trips to/from the station and bus stops) and cyclists combined.
294. In terms of the commercial unit(s), given their combined small size it is expected that this element of the scheme would serve local residents and pedestrians in the general vicinity of the site, and would generate very few staff trips. The development is forecast to generate a total of seven and five vehicular movements (inclusive of servicing) during the AM peak and PM peak hour respectively with 37 delivery and servicing trips per day.
295. Following review of the trip generation for the development it is accepted that the impact of development related vehicles on the highway network will be negligible. Any cumulative impacts on the Abbey Wood station and the public transport network would be minimal and would not warrant mitigation.
296. The Local Highway Authority have highlighted that there have been incidences where large amounts of people arriving and departing Abbey Wood station have caused congestion in the existing pedestrian spaces which have led to unsafe scenarios with conflicts between pedestrians, buses and other vehicles. A financial contribution was requested for future improvement to the access to Abbey Wood station and the adjacent bus stops on Harrow Manorway. The active travel environment is further discussed within the following paragraphs and the applicant has agreed to a financial contribution towards wider active travel infrastructure improvements in the immediate vicinity of the site. This inclusion is considered reasonable mitigation for the proposed development.

#### Healthy streets and active travel

297. TfL's Healthy Streets approach aims to improve air quality, reduce congestion and make attractive places to live, work and do business. The proposal is supported by a daytime and night-time Active Travel Zone (ATZ) Assessment, with the use of healthy streets indicators 3-10 and several key trip attractors identified. Further details relating to the night-time condition within the vicinity of Abbey Wood station was also provided during the course of the application.
298. The ATZ assessment consists of five routes to key destinations, which include:
- **Route 1** – A2041 Bus Stop (S), Horizons Academy Bexley, Strategic Cycle Network, and Lakeside Medical Practice.
  - **Route 2** – Abbey Wood Play Area.

- **Route 3** – Abbey Wood Station and Boxgrove Primary School.
- **Route 4** – Lesnes Abbey Wood Local Nature Reserve, A2041 Bus Stop (N), and Strategic Cycle Network.
- **Route 5** – Town Centre local shops, St Michael & All Angels Church, and St Benet's Church.

299. The ATZ assessment has identified improvements along key routes 2, 3 and 4. It is noted that the Local Highway Authority (LHA) have requested that a further ATZ action plan should be secured with further information to be agreed relating to details of works and implementation. The LHA have advised that the scope of the ATZ was not agreed in this instance, although have not identified specific issues with the routes assessed or outcomes of the assessments. GLA and TfL officers have, however, also reviewed the ATZ assessment and immediate active travel environment. The applicant has agreed to a planning contribution of £45,000 towards active travel improvements within the vicinity of the development.
300. In terms of impacts on the immediate pedestrian and cycle environment, the proposed layout enables the creation of a new fully accessible, east-west connection through the site and landscaping which provides increased connectivity and improvements to the public realm. The landscaping proposals on Sedgemere Road and Harrow Manorway would also result in a considerable improvement to the pedestrian environment from the existing site condition. During the application process, TfL officers raised concerns relating to a pedestrian and cycle pinch point to the west of the site on the eastern side of Harrow Manorway due to the narrow width and shared use of this path and cycle dismount location to access the crossing. The applicant has since altered the landscape proposals to include an increased setback at the north-western end of the site, allowing for greater pavement width which could then link with any future redevelopment of the site to the north. Whilst a minor alteration, GLA officers consider that this is a sufficient design response and an improvement from the existing condition when balancing other considerations relating to the multi-functional benefits offered by the landscaping.
301. A contribution of £12,000 towards local wayfinding signage would be secured within the s106 agreement in line with TfL officer comments.
302. Overall, GLA officers consider that reasonable mitigation would be secured in response to sustainable and active travel policy requirements within London Plan policy T2 and Local Plan policy DP22.

#### Site access and highway works

303. Site access is proposed via Sedgemere Road for vehicles and via both Sedgemere Road and Harrow Manorway for pedestrians and cyclists. Further details of immediate highway works would be secured through planning condition for further Local Highway Authority review in this instance, however it is expected that this would include:
- Widening of the Harrow Manorway pavement;

- Improvements to the pavement condition along Sedgemere Road adjacent to the site, alongside a reduction of existing vehicular crossovers from three to two, with reinstatement of footway and kerbs where crossovers are removed;
  - Construction of an inset loading bay on Sedgemere Road, with a continuous footway provided;
  - Formation of vehicle entrances to two on-site parking courts along Sedgemere Road, incorporating tactile paving, appropriate road markings, and signage; and
  - All ancillary works necessary for completion, including the relocation or adjustment of street furniture, drainage, lighting, and other highway apparatus as required.
304. Overall, it is considered that suitable access provision would be provided to the site, along with measures which would be secured relating to the immediate highway works. Final landscaping and on-site public realm details and management would be secured through planning condition and s106 obligations, including 24/7 access to the new through route, along with on-going access to basement and mezzanine cycle storage. As described above, the proposed development includes public realm proposals improving the pedestrian and cycle environment around the site.

#### Cycle parking

305. Cycle parking provision combined comprises 418 spaces (402 long stay and 16 short stay) which is in line with minimum cycle parking standards set out in London Plan policy T5. A condition would be secured requiring further details of arrangements for cycle storage to ensure compliance with the London Plan and following the London Cycling Design Standards. On-going access to residential lobby lifts for transportation of cycles would also be secured through planning condition in the event of any cycle lift breakdown. Overall, with measures secured the cycle provision is considered acceptable in response to policy requirements.

#### Travel planning

306. An Outline Residential Travel Plan accompanies the application which sets out measures to influence residents to travel by active modes (walking and cycling) and public transport. The Travel Plan outlines forecasted targets three and five years on from the baseline year recognising the low car parking and to encourage walking and cycling. The Travel Plan is in line with the Mayor's Strategic Mode Shift target outlined in policy T1. The aims and targets contained within the plan form an acceptable basis for planning and outlining how active travel would be promoted and travel patterns monitored post occupation.
307. A further final Travel Plan would be secured, implemented and monitored as part of any S106 agreement in line with London Plan policy T4. This would also include a further commitment to use reasonable endeavours to provide

subsidies for cycling following comments received from TfL officers during consultation.

### Car parking

308. The site is proposed to be car free, with the exception of seven accessible bays, for three percent of residential units, provided from the outset which is consistent with London Plan policy T6. Whilst the TA does include locations where additional disabled persons' parking for up to ten percent of units can be provided within the redline, required by London Plan policy T6, it is noted that this would be difficult to achieve when considering other competing interests for ground level space allocation. The TA includes an Outline Car Park Management Plan which sets out measures including allocation and ongoing review. On balance, however this is accepted noting site constraints, the location of the development in proximity to public transport (including step-free access) and contribution which would be secured to improve the surrounding active travel environment. There is also no disabled persons' space proposed for commercial use, however for the same reasons this is also accepted.
309. A full Car Park Design and Management Plan would be secured through planning condition, ensuring only Blue badge holder use of the car parking and its allocation on the basis of need rather than being tied to particular dwellings. 20 per cent of disabled persons' parking spaces will be equipped with active electric vehicle charging points with the remaining passive (80 per cent) in line with policy requirements, to be secured through planning condition.
310. The development lies within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) and suitable obligations would be secured within the s106 to ensure permit prohibition for future residents and occupiers. A financial contribution would be secured towards review by the Council of the impact of the development on the Abbey Wood Controlled Parking Zone and adjacent areas, along with any resulting measures.
311. Whilst inclusion of an off-site car club space has been considered, the applicant has sought to prioritise other active and sustainable travel measures within what is an acceptable package of transport mitigations. It is noted that the TA identifies an existing car club vehicle nearby.
312. The above measures are considered suitable to ensure that the proposed development is acceptable overall in response to relevant planning policy requirements.

### Deliveries, servicing and waste management

313. A Delivery, Servicing & Waste Management Plan has been provided. It is forecast that the proposed development will generate 37 delivery and servicing trips per day, resulting in an average of three vehicular arrivals per hour over an assumed 12-hour day.

314. The servicing strategy includes two on street loading bays on Sedgemere Road to facilitate deliveries, waste collection, and servicing. The proposed arrangement, which includes on-street loading is considered acceptable in this instance. A further detailed Delivery and Servicing Plan would be secured through planning condition, which GLA officers note would include details of the use of sustainable freight options and a strategy to ensure that deliveries to the site and other servicing vehicles avoid peak hours in response to TfL officer comments. Noting the condition to be imposed above, the delivery and servicing proposals are acceptable in response to London Plan policy T7 and Local Plan policy DP24.
315. In terms of waste management, the application proposes that refuse collection from a loading bay on Sedgemere Road and the submitted Delivery, Servicing and Waste Management Plan provides a general overview of the waste strategy, including proposed storage capacities and collection arrangements. Whilst the overall approach to waste management is acceptable in principle, there are aspects where further clarification and detail are required to ensure full compliance with Local Plan Policy DP26 although these are not considered to result in fundamental design constraints and can be addressed through planning condition. Accordingly, a further Detailed Waste and Recycling Management Plan would be secured through planning condition which would address matters including bin access and rotation, collection point management, commercial waste storage, management of refuse vehicle access to avoid adverse impact on the highway and provision of updated refuse storage and layout plans, to include locations for bulky waste. It is considered that through imposition of this condition, the development would align with requirements of London Plan policy T7 and Local Plan policy DP26.

#### Demolition and construction management

316. An Outline Construction Logistics Plan (CLP) and draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) accompany the application. Measures have been included to avoid disruption to public transport infrastructure and the plans submitted encourages sustainable transport to the site. A further detailed Demolition and Construction Environmental Management and Logistics Plan would be secured through planning condition which is acceptable in response to London Plan policy T7.
317. To reduce road danger the applicant must ensure association with Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) Standard and Direct Vision Standard.

#### Conclusion

318. Overall, the transport impacts of the proposed development would be supported by necessary mitigation measures as set out above secured through the S106 Agreement and planning conditions. The proposed development is considered to acceptably respond to London Plan and Local Plan policies.

## Mitigating the impact of the development through planning obligations

319. Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 as amended in 2019 states that a section 106 planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. These are statutory tests.
320. The NPPF states that “Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.”
321. London Plan policy DF1 sets out that that development proposals should provide the infrastructure and meet the other relevant policy requirements necessary to ensure that they are sustainable and to support delivery of the Plan. Policy DF1 states that when setting policies seeking planning obligations in local Development Plan Documents and in situations where it has been demonstrated that planning obligations cannot viably be supported by a specific development, applicants and decision-makers should firstly apply priority to affordable housing and necessary public transport improvements.
322. Local Plan policy SP7 (Social and community services and facilities) states that the Council will ensure the identification, development, completion, safeguarding and monitoring of services, facilities and open spaces that are required to support housing and employment growth in the borough so as to make a positive contribution to creating strong, cohesive and sustainable communities. One of the ways in which this will be achieved is by ensuring developers contribute to the reasonable costs of new, expanded and/or improved services, facilities and open spaces made necessary by their development proposals through the use of planning obligations where appropriate and/or the community infrastructure levy.
323. The Council’s Planning Obligations SPD provides guidance on the contributions that will be required for different types of developments. Table 3.1 of this document sets out the qualifying development and planning obligations to be sought. For residential developments of 10 units or more obligations are sought in relation to the following:

Obligation	Priority
Affordable Housing	High priority
Transport and Access	
Education	Medium priority
Health	
Open space, Sports and Leisure facilities	
Community Facilities and services	

324. Pursuant to the consideration within the previous sections of this report, and in line with the policy context set out above, GLA officers propose to secure several planning obligations required to appropriately mitigate the impact of this development, which are set out above and where appropriate there is detailed consideration given in the relevant topic section of the report.
325. In this case, when considering the viability position of the proposed development, affordable housing and transport and access obligations have been prioritised as necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It is noted that whilst the NHS and Historic England have requested and suggested financial contributions to support health infrastructure delivery and towards management and maintenance of the Lesnes Abbey site, GLA officers consider that appropriate prioritisation has been given to planning obligations. The NHS may also have further opportunity to submit a CIL bid towards future health provision for the Council's consideration.
326. GLA officers are confident that the obligations in the Section 106 agreement meet the tests in Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 as amended in 2019 as they either will be spent on "infrastructure" as defined in the regulations or will be sufficiently narrowly described in the section 106 agreement.

## **Legal considerations**

327. Under the arrangements set out in Article 7 of the Order and the powers conferred by Section 2A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) the Deputy Mayor, acting under delegated authority, is the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the purposes of determining this planning application ref: 24/02488/FULM.
328. Section 35 of the Greater London Authority Act 2007 inserts section 2F into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which includes a requirement that for applications the Mayor takes over, the Mayor must give the applicants and the borough the opportunity to make oral representations at a hearing. He is also required to publish a document setting out.
- who else may make oral representations;
  - the procedures to be followed at the hearing; and,
  - arrangements for identifying information, which must be agreed by persons making representations.
329. The details of the above are set out in the Mayor's Procedure for Representation Hearings which reflects, as far as is practicable, current best practice for speaking at planning committee amongst borough councils.
330. In carrying out his duties in relation to the determination of this application, the Deputy Mayor must have regard to a number of statutory provisions. Listed below are some of the most important provisions for this application.

331. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that in dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:
- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application;
  - b) Any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application; and
  - c) Any other material consideration.
332. Section 70(4) defines “local finance consideration” as:
- a) A grant or other financial assistance that has been, or will or could be, provided to a relevant authority by a Minister of the Crown; or
  - b) Sums that a relevant authority has received, or will or could receive, in payment of Community Infrastructure Levy.
333. Furthermore, in determining any planning application and connected application, the Mayor is required by section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to determine the application in accordance with the Development Plan (i.e. the London Plan and the adopted Local Plan) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
334. Other guidance, which has been formally adopted by Bexley Council and the GLA (e.g. Supplementary Planning Documents, Supplementary Planning Guidance and London Plan Guidance), will also be material considerations of some weight (where relevant).
335. GLA Officers are satisfied that the current report to the Deputy Mayor has had regard to the relevant provision of the Development Plan. The proposed section 106 package has been set out and complies with the relevant statutory tests, adequately mitigates the impact of the development and provides necessary infrastructure improvements.
336. As regards to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) considerations, the development will make payments to both Mayoral CIL and Bexley CIL.
337. In accordance with his statutory duty in section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Mayor shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving Listed Buildings, their settings and any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. These matters have been addressed within earlier sections of the report.
338. Where the Mayor takes over an application, he becomes responsible for the section 106 legal agreement, although he is required to consult the relevant borough(s). In this instance, there have been a series of lawyer led meetings to discuss the section 106 content, and it has progressed on a number of key issues. Both the Mayor and the borough are given powers to enforce planning obligations.
339. When determining these planning applications, the Mayor is under a duty to take account of the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 as they relate to

the development proposal and the conflicting interests of the applicants and any third party affected by, or opposing, the application, in reaching his decision. Planning decisions on the use of land can only be taken in line with the Town and Country Planning Acts and decided in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

340. The key Articles to be aware of include the following:

A) Article 6 - Right to a fair trial: In the determination of his civil rights and obligations... everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law.

B) Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life: Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

C) Article 1 of the First Protocol - Protection of property: Every person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions.

341. It should be noted, however, that most Convention rights are not absolute and set out circumstances when an interference with a person's rights is permitted i.e. necessary to do so to give effect to the Town and Country Planning Acts and in the interests of such matters as public safety, national economic well-being and protection of health, amenity of the community etc. In this case this Representation Hearing report sets out how this application accords with the Development Plan.

342. Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 states that a section 106 planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. These are now statutory tests.

343. The Equality Act 2010 provides that in exercising its functions (which includes the functions exercised by the Mayor as Local Planning Authority), that the Mayor as a public authority shall amongst other duties have due regard to the need to a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act; b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

344. The protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Equality Act acknowledges that compliance with the duties set out may involve treating some persons more favourably than others, but that this does not permit conduct that would otherwise be prohibited under the Act.

345. GLA Officers are satisfied that the application material and officers' assessment has taken into account the equality and human rights issues referred to above.

Particular matters of consideration have included provision of affordable housing, accessible housing and the protection of neighbouring residential amenity during construction and operational phases.

## **Conclusion and planning balance**

346. As detailed above Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 requires matters to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
347. When assessing the planning application, the Deputy Mayor is required to determine the application in accordance with the development plan and to have regard to all other material considerations.
348. Partial conflicts are identified to London Plan policy D9(B) and Local Plan policy DP12 concerning tall building locational criteria. However, the proposed development is in close proximity to, and would be perceived as part of, the existing and emerging cluster of taller development in Abbey Wood and other emerging development. The development would respond and positively contribute to the surrounding context and character, with acceptable tall building visual, functional and environmental impacts assessed. The development itself would be of a high quality design and other than the locational policy conflicts identified above, the development is in accordance with the design policies contained within Chapter 3 of the London Plan and Local Plan policies SP5, DP11 and DP12.
349. The proposed development is assessed to result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the setting and significance of Lesnes Abbey, Scheduled Monument and listed Grade II which would result in conflicts with London Plan policies HC1, policies SP6 and DP14 of Bexley's Local Plan and partially in conflict with London Plan policy D9(C,1,d). Considerable weight and importance has been attached to the harm caused by the proposals to Lesnes Abbey. However, it is concluded that the public benefits delivered by the scheme, improved over the course of the application, would clearly and convincingly outweigh the heritage harm. The balancing exercise under paragraph 215 of the NPPF is therefore favourable to the proposals and the proposal would be acceptable in terms of impact on heritage assets.
350. The applicant has improved the affordable housing offer during the course of the application, resulting in a positive and significant contribution to the overall public benefits package. The omission of a late-stage viability review mechanism required by London Plan policy H5 is considered to be reasonable in this instance. Considerable weight is afforded to the improved affordable housing offer.
351. The drainage strategy for the proposed development would maximise on site sustainable drainage and attenuation measures, although proposes to discharge surface water into a Thames Water foul sewer under Harrow Manorway. The proposal to discharge to the foul network conflicts with Bexley Local Plan policy DP33 and constitutes a departure from the drainage hierarchy

contained within London Plan policy S113 and non-statutory National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems. In this case it is not considered that alternative discharge options or locations are practicable, when also considering identified capacity issues locally with surface water drainage networks. The complete removal of surface water from the foul network in line with wider strategies is not considered achievable in the current circumstances. The principles of the drainage strategy to reduce overall site flows from the existing site condition aligns with aims to attenuate runoff and is not considered to give rise to an increased sewer flood risk. The development is assessed to comply with London Plan policy S112 and Local Plan policy DP32 relating to flood risk management. Having considered the circumstances above, the drainage strategy is considered acceptable when balanced against the delivery a significant number of new homes within the highly accessible location to meet wider growth policy aspirations.

352. The proposals would provide significant public benefits, which would weigh in favour of the scheme. The proposed development would deliver new homes and affordable homes, along with non-residential town centre floorspace, public realm and landscape improvements within a highly accessible location. It would bring forward an underutilised brownfield site in close proximity to Abbey Wood Station, designated as a Sustainable Development Location and Abbey Wood Village Local Town Centre as defined by the Bexley Local Plan and the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area. The proposal would make a positive contribution towards achieving relevant housing targets and London's housing need in alignment with the NPPF and London Plan policy objectives and Bexley Local Plan land use and housing policies relating to housing and town centre intensification.
353. The proposed development also results in a number of financial and non-financial obligations including through the submission of an employment and skills plan to enable local residents to train in construction, to secure landscape and ecological improvements, improvements to the surrounding active travel environment and CIL payment.
354. Overall, and notwithstanding some elements of policy conflict identified above, the proposed development is considered to accord with the development plan, when read as a whole, and there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to justify refusal of permission.

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We are committed to being anti-racist, planning for a diverse and inclusive London and engaging all communities in shaping their city.