

# MAYOR OF LONDON

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham  
By Email

**Our ref:** GLA/2020/6074/S2

**Your ref:** 20/00314/FUL

**Date:** 10 August 2020

Dear Olivia St-Amour

**Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 Direction under Section 2A of the 1990 Act**

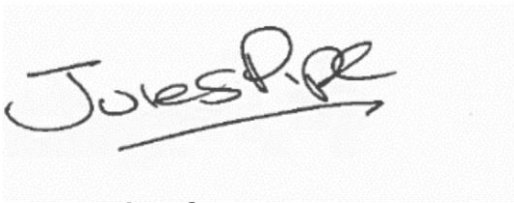
**Dagenham Film Studios, Former Sanofi Aventis, Yewtree Avenue, Dagenham, London, RM10 7FN**

**Local Planning Authority reference: 20/00314/FUL**

I refer to your correspondence of 28 July 2020, informing the Mayor that the local planning authority is minded to approve planning permission for the above planning application. I refer you also to the notice that was dated 11 August 2020 under the provisions of article 5(1)(b)(i) of the above Order.

The Mayor has delegated his planning powers to me. Having now considered a report on this case (GLA ref: 2020/6074/S2, copy enclosed), I am content to allow the local planning authority to determine the case itself, subject to any action that the Secretary of State may take, and do not therefore wish to direct refusal or take over the application for my own determination.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jules Pipe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Jules Pipe CBE**

Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Cc: Unmesh Desai, London Assembly Constituency Member  
Andrew Boff, Chair of London Assembly Planning Committee  
National Planning Casework Unit, MHCLG  
Lucinda Turner, TfL  
Sam Pullar, BeFirst, Maritime House, 1 Linton Road, Barking IG11 8HG

# Dagenham Film Studios, Former Sanofi Aventis, Yewtree Avenue, Dagenham

in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

local planning authority reference 20/00314/FUL

<p><b>Strategic planning application stage II referral</b></p> <p>Town &amp; Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town &amp; Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008</p>
<p><b>The proposal</b></p> <p>Retention of two on-site workshops and redevelopment of this brownfield site to provide a film studios and related ancillary uses.</p>
<p><b>The applicant</b></p> <p>The applicant is <b>Barking and Dagenham Council</b>. The architect is <b>PRP Architects</b>.</p>
<p><b>Key dates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GLA pre-application meeting:</b> 21 November 2019</li> <li>• <b>GLA stage 1 report:</b> 11 May 2020</li> <li>• <b>LPA Planning Committee decision:</b> 6 July 2020</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic issues</b></p> <p><b>Principle of development:</b> The redevelopment of this vacant brownfield site, providing a mix of film studio and ancillary workspace is strongly supported in principle.</p> <p><b>Urban design:</b> The Council has secured key details of facing materials by way of condition.</p> <p><b>Sustainable development:</b> The applicant has improved the UGF score and has provided justification why the UGF target has not been met. The applicant has responded to issues relating to energy and drainage, and on balance the approach is acceptable in strategic planning terms. A carbon offset contribution has been secured within the draft unilateral undertaking.</p> <p><b>Transport:</b> Opportunities should be taken to reduce the level of car parking and a Travel Plan which includes a review of the parking provision should it not be fully utilised, and s278 works have been secured by s106 obligation. A Construction Logistics Plan, Delivery and Servicing Plan, delivery charging points and cycle facilities, have been secured by condition.</p>
<p><b>The Council's decision</b></p> <p>In this instance Barking and Dagenham Council has resolved to grant permission subject to planning conditions and conclusion of a Unilateral Undertaking.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>That Barking and Dagenham Council be advised that the Mayor is content for it to determine the case itself, subject to any action that the Secretary of State may take, and does not therefore wish to direct refusal or direct that he is to be the local planning authority.</p>

## Context

1 On 24 March 2020 the Mayor of London received documents from Barking and Dagenham 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 2008 Order:

- 1B.1(a) *“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 outside Central London and with a total floorspace of more than 15,000 square metres”*
- 3F.1. *“Development for a use, other than residential use, which includes the provision of more than 200 car parking spaces in connection with that use”*

2 On 11 May 2020 the Mayor considered planning report GLA/5315/01, and subsequently advised Barking and Dagenham Council that whilst the principle of the application was broadly supported in strategic planning terms, it did not yet comply with the London Plan and the Intend to Publish London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 39 of the above-mentioned report; but that the possible remedies set out in that paragraph of that report could address these deficiencies.

3 A copy of the above-mentioned report is attached. The essentials of the case with regard to the proposal, the site, case history, strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance are as set out therein, unless otherwise stated in this report. Since then, the application has been revised in response to the Mayor’s concerns (see below). On 6 July 2020 Barking and Dagenham Council decided that it was minded to grant planning permission for the application, and on 28 July 2020 it advised the Mayor of this decision. Under the provisions of Article 5 of the Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor may allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged, direct Barking and Dagenham Council under Article 6 to refuse the application or issue a direction to Barking and Dagenham Council under Article 7 that he is to act as the Local Planning Authority for the purposes of determining the application. The Mayor has until 11 August 2020 to notify the Council of his decision and to issue any direction.

4 The decision on this case, and the reasons, will be made available on the GLA’s website [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk).

## Update

5 At the consultation stage, Barking and Dagenham Council was advised that while the application is broadly supported in strategic planning terms, the application did not comply with the London Plan and the Intend to Publish London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 39 of the above-mentioned report; but that the possible remedies set out in that paragraph could address these deficiencies:

- **Principle of development:** The redevelopment of this vacant brownfield site, providing a mix of film studio and ancillary workspace is strongly supported in principle.
- **Urban design and heritage:** The design, layout, height and massing of the scheme is acceptable in strategic planning terms, and the response to Green

Belt context and local heritage assets is also acceptable. The Council should secure key details of facing materials.

- **Sustainable development:** Further discussion is required in relation to the applicant's energy strategy, flood risk and drainage assessment and urban greening.
- **Transport:** The applicant must resolve issues in respect of; trip generation, active travel and vehicle and cycle parking. The Council must secure a construction logistics plan, a travel plan, a delivery and servicing plan and active travel improvements.

6 Since consultation stage GLA officers have engaged in joint discussions with the applicant, the Council and TfL officers with a view to addressing the above matters. Furthermore, as part of Barking and Dagenham Council's draft decision on the case, various planning conditions and obligations have been secured. An update against the issues raised at consultation stage is set out below.

## Employment

7 The application proposes the retention of two on-site workshops and redevelopment of brownfield land to provide a film studios and related ancillary uses with an increase of approximately 40,000 sq.m. of B1(a)/B2/B8 floorspace, and creation of approximately 1,202 full time equivalent jobs. The site was previously used for the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, and the proposals would re-introduce a use at the site which shares many of the characteristics of storage and distribution and light industrial uses – given the building and yard typologies, and types of movements associated with the film studio and the supporting workshops. This was strongly supported at Stage 1.

## Urban design

### Height, massing and architecture

8 The proposed development was considered not to give rise to any strategic design concerns with regards to height and massing at Stage 1. The applicant was requested to revise the material palette to allow for other objectives to be met such as green/growing walls. These revisions were not provided, however, matters related to green infrastructure are set out in the relevant section below. The buildings' architecture, materiality, scale, height and massing reflect the industrial character of the area and is considered to be in keeping with the emerging context of the wider site. Details relating to all external facing materials will be secured by condition.

### Layout

9 The layout of the site was considered acceptable at Stage 1 as it provides the most efficient use of land and allows the development potential of this underutilised vacant brownfield site to be maximised.

### Visual impact to the Green Belt

10 The applicant provided a series of views from within the Green Belt which demonstrate that whilst the buildings would be a visible addition to the background

setting of the Green Belt, this impact has been minimised as far as possible within the operational requirements of the site and was considered acceptable at Stage 1.

### Heritage

11 The site is not within a conservation area and is not subject to any heritage designations. The proposals were considered not to harm the setting of the Grade II listed Canteen at Head Office of Rhone Poulenc Limited to the north of the application site, nor the adjacent conservation area at Stage 1.

### Agent of change

12 The Stage 1 report required that necessary mitigation measures be secured by the Council with respect to noise, vibration and air quality to ensure that: i) that the proposed creative uses would successfully coexist with the existing employment uses on adjacent plots; and, ii) surrounding businesses/industrial areas would not be compromised by the proposed development in terms of their function, access, servicing and hours of operation. Noise associated with the proposed development will be managed through the acoustic design of buildings, which will be secured by condition.

### Fire safety

13 The applicant had submitted a fire safety strategy produced by a suitably qualified third-party assessor at Stage 1, which was considered acceptable. A condition is proposed to ensure that a detailed Fire Statement is submitted for approval prior to occupation of any Phase.

## **Sustainable development**

### Energy

14 The Energy Hierarchy has been followed and the proposed strategy is generally supported. The applicant has proposed improvements to the fabric and energy systems resulting in an overall Be Lean saving of 15% which is welcomed.

15 The carbon dioxide savings exceed the 35% policy requirement set out in policies 5.2 of the London Plan and SI2 of the Intend to Publish London Plan. In the event that a 35% on-site reduction is not achieved, a carbon offset payment will be required, and this will be secured by condition.

16 The applicant has provided justification for proposing separate heating systems consisting of multiple ASHP units to cope with variable and unpredictable heat demand. Additional information has been provided relating to the futureproofing of the development for connection to a district heat network where this would be possible. The applicant should continue to engage with the local authority regarding the potential of heat export from the neighbouring data centre. On balance, this approach is acceptable.

### Flood risk and drainage

17 The surface water drainage strategy did not have appropriate regard to the drainage hierarchy and greenfield runoff at Stage 1. This has been revised to address the drainage hierarchy. The applicant has provided details clarifying the greenfield

calculation applies to the new development only. Further clarity has been provided regarding rainwater harvesting which has not been implemented in light of the intermittent nature of the site and the potential for stored rainwater to sit stagnant for a prolonged period of time. Sustainable urban drainage management and maintenance plans for relevant phases of the development will be secured by condition; this is considered acceptable.

18 The proposed development generally meets the requirements of policies 5.12 and 5.15 of the London Plan and SI12 and SI5 of the Intend to Publish London Plan, which relate to flood risk management and water efficiency.

### Urban greening

19 The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) score was calculated as 0.076 at Stage 1, which falls considerably below the target of 0.3 for commercial development set out in Policy G5 of the Intend to Publish London Plan. The applicant has provided additional information following the issue of the Stage 1 report which increases the UGF score to 0.123 to reflect the provision of green roofs on the site. Whilst this falls short of the target, additional urban greening has been demonstrated to be unfeasible due in part to the limited load capacity of roofs on two buildings on the site which inhibits the use of these roofs for urban greening.

20 The applicant was requested at Stage 1 to consider the provision of positive net gains for biodiversity. Information has been provided which states that there would be an overall loss of biodiversity units and 3.47 units are required to achieve 10% net gain. A financial contribution has been secured through a planning obligation to offset this loss.

### Circular economy

21 At Stage 1 it was considered that the application responded positively to the circular economy principles, promoting the re-use and/or recycling of buildings, construction and demolition materials, minimising resource use and waste by refurbishing, repairing and restoring two existing buildings and bringing these into optimum viable use.

## **Transport**

22 Concern was raised regarding trip generation, active travel and cycle parking at Stage 1. Having regard to further information provided and the provisions secured through the unilateral undertaking which include; cycle lane egress from the site to Yewtree Avenue, along with a s278 off-site highways work agreement, and associated security; a Travel Plan with a contribution of £5,000 (index linked) for its monitoring; a Delivery and Servicing Plan; Construction Logistics Plan; delivery charging points and cycle facilities, it is considered that these transport issues have been satisfactorily addressed.

23 The development includes 350 car parking spaces. As noted at stage 1, this is close to the maximum standard for office development whereas the employment density of a film studio is expected to be lower and therefore the spaces could be regarded as excessive, contrary to Policy T6(B). Parking restraint is one of the most effective ways of supporting the wider aims of the London Plan, ensuring sustainable development and

delivering the Mayor's targets for active travel. We would have expected to see a more restraint-based approach in order to deliver greater benefits in this regard. A Travel Plan has been secured by s106 obligation which includes regular reviews following occupation of the site and includes the commitment to reduce the level of car parking if it is not fully utilised. The site is very close to a District Line station and served by two high-frequency bus routes, and the borough's aim to maximise local employment provides good opportunities to support sustainable local travel. TfL is also keen to see greater improvements to walking and cycling and would encourage any additional opportunities to be maximised as the development is delivered. Other transport matters are secured by condition.

## Response to consultation

23 Barking and Dagenham Council sent out a total of 330 neighbour consultations, as well as notifications to statutory and non-statutory organisations, and issued a press notice. There were no responses received from the public on the application.

24 The following organisations also issued response to the consultations:

- **London Fire Brigade** – no objection
- **London Underground** – no objection, subject to conditions providing further information on all structures including demolition, details on the use of tall plant/scaffolding, accommodating the location of the existing London Underground structure, demonstrating that there will at no time be any potential security risk to the railway structures, accommodating ground movement arising from the construction and mitigating the effects of noise and vibration arising from adjoining operations within the structures.
- **Network Rail** – no objection subject to the proposal, both during construction and after completion of the works not; encroaching onto Network Rail land, affecting the safety, operation or integrity of the company's railway and its infrastructure, undermining its support zone, damaging the company's infrastructure, placing additional load on cutting, adversely affecting any railway land or structure, over-sailing or encroaching upon the air-space of any Network Rail and or cause to obstruct or interfere with any works or proposed works or Network Rail development in the future.
- **Environment Agency** – no objection, subject to conditions requiring a remediation strategy and verification of said strategy, a monitoring and maintenance plan, no drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground, no piling or other foundations designs using penetrative methods shall be carried out other than with the written consent of the local planning authority and a scheme for managing any boreholes to be submitted.
- **Metropolitan Police** – the development shall achieve a Certificate of Compliance to a Secure by Design scheme where they exist or, achieve secure by design standards to the satisfaction of the Metropolitan Police, details of which shall be provided in writing to the local planning authority prior to first habitation or use.

25 Issues raised in response to consultation have been considered in this report, the Mayor's Stage 1 report, and the Council's committee report of 6 July 2020. The Council's Planning Committee resolved to grant the application as set out in paragraph 3 of this report.

## **Draft Unilateral Undertaking**

26 The draft Unilateral Undertaking includes the following provisions:

- Where employment vacancies arise during the course of development, these will be offered to the residents of the borough.
- A strategy for maximising local employment and training opportunities from the operation of the film studio at the site, alongside encouraging the involvement of local businesses in the studio's supply chain and community engagement.
- A highways agreement to secure offsite highways works; the provision of a cycle lane egress from the site to Yewtree Avenue, and associated security
- A Travel Plan including a mechanism for reviewing the quantum of car parking over time and a contribution of £5,000 (index linked) for monitoring the Travel Plan
- A formula-based carbon offset contribution no later than 3 months from the date of practical completion

## **Legal considerations**

27 Under the arrangements set out in Article 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor has the power under Article 6 to direct the local planning authority to refuse permission for a planning application referred to him under Article 4 of the Order. He also has the power to issue a direction under Article 7 that he is to act as the local planning authority for the purpose of determining the application. The Mayor may also leave the decision to the local authority. In directing refusal the Mayor must have regard to the matters set out in Article 6(2) of the Order, including the principal purposes of the Greater London Authority, the effect on health and sustainable development, national policies and international obligations, regional planning guidance, and the use of the River Thames. The Mayor may direct refusal if he considers that to grant permission would be contrary to good strategic planning in Greater London. If he decides to direct refusal, the Mayor must set out his reasons, and the local planning authority must issue these with the refusal notice. If the Mayor decides to direct that he is to be the local planning authority, he must have regard to the matters set out in Article 7(3) and set out his reasons in the direction.

## **Financial considerations**

28 Should the Mayor direct refusal, he would be the principal party at any subsequent appeal hearing or public inquiry. Government guidance emphasises that parties usually pay their own expenses arising from an appeal.

29 Following an inquiry caused by a direction to refuse, costs may be awarded against the Mayor if he has either directed refusal unreasonably; handled a referral from a planning authority unreasonably; or behaved unreasonably during the appeal. A major factor in deciding whether the Mayor has acted unreasonably will be the extent to which he has taken account of established planning policy.

30 Should the Mayor take over the application he would be responsible for holding a representation hearing and negotiating any planning obligation. He would also be



responsible for determining any reserved matters applications (unless he directs the council to do so) and determining any approval of details (unless the council agrees to do so).

## **Conclusion**

31 The strategic issues raised at consultation stage with respect to employment; design; heritage; environment; and transport have been addressed and having regard to the details of the application, the matters set out in the committee report and the Council's draft decision, on balance the application complies with the London Plan and Intend to Publish London Plan, and there are no sound planning reasons for the Mayor to intervene in this case. It is therefore recommended that Barking and Dagenham Council is advised to determine the case itself, subject to any action that the Secretary of State may take.

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for further information, contact GLA Planning Unit (Development Management Team):

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11 May 2020

## Dagenham Film Studio, Dagenham

in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

planning application no.20/00314/FUL

### Strategic planning application stage 1 referral

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

### The proposal

Retention of two on-site workshops and redevelopment of this brownfield site to provide a film studios and related ancillary uses.

### The applicant

The applicant is **Barking and Dagenham Council**. The architect is **PRP Architects**.

### Strategic issues

**Principle of development:** The redevelopment of this vacant brownfield site, providing a mix of film studio and ancillary workspace is strongly supported in principle (paragraphs 11-14)

**Urban design:** The design, layout, height and massing of the scheme is acceptable in strategic planning terms, and the response to Green Belt context and local heritage assets is also acceptable. The Council should secure key details of facing materials (paragraphs 25-29)

**Sustainable development:** Further discussion is required in relation to the applicant's energy strategy, flood risk and drainage assessment and urban greening (paragraphs 25-29)

**Transport:** The applicant must resolve issues in respect of; trip generation, active travel, and vehicle and cycle parking. The Council must secure a construction logistics plan, a travel plan, a delivery and servicing plan and active travel improvements (paragraphs 30-35).

### Recommendation

That Barking and Dagenham Council be advised that while the principle of the development is broadly supported in strategic planning terms, the application does not yet comply with the London Plan and Intend to Publish London Plan for the reasons set out in paragraph 39 of this report; but that the possible remedies set out in that paragraph could address these deficiencies.

## Context

1 On 24 March 2020 the Mayor of London received documents from Barking and Dagenham Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. Under the provisions of The Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor must provide the Council with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. The Mayor may also provide other comments. This report sets out information for the Mayor's use in deciding what decision to make.

2 The application is referable under the following Categories of the Schedule to the Order 2008:

- 1B.1(a) *“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 outside Central London and with a total floorspace of more than 15,000 square metres”*
- 3F.1. *“Development for a use, other than residential use, which includes the provision of more than 200 car parking spaces in connection with that use”*

3 Once Barking and Dagenham Council has resolved to determine the application, it is required to refer it back to the Mayor for his decision as to whether to direct refusal; take it over for his own determination; or allow the Council to determine it itself.

4 The Mayor of London's statement on this case will be made available on the GLA website [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk).

## Site description

5 The 18 acre site adjacent to Dagenham East Station forms part of a wider former Sanofi site, and is currently vacant with the pre-existing pharmaceutical operations now long extinguished. The site is located to the east of Rainham Road South (A1112), north of the London Underground District Line railway which runs between Dagenham East Underground station (which falls directly south west of the site) and Elm Park Underground station (which is due east). The surrounds of the site are characterised by open space and Green Belt in the form of outside sports facilities, nature reserves and other areas of open space. South of the plot beyond the railway line is largely residential with other commercial and residential uses clustered west of the site. The site has been cleared for development for some years. The former Mayor previously considered a scheme for the wider Sanofi site (of which this application site forms the most western part) on 22 March 2012 (D&P/4911/02) which was subsequently approved by Barking and Dagenham Council on 29 March 2012. The approved scheme was for the mixed-use redevelopment of the site to provide a combination of commercial and community uses, which was subsequently varied to allow alterations to car parking provision and height parameters. Since then the masterplan has been overlaid with various other planning permissions which have seen the construction of 2 data centres at the eastern edge of the wider site and a hotel in the centre portion of the plot.

6 The site records a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 3 at its northern edge and 0 at the rear of the site on a scale of 0-6b where 6b represents the most accessible location.

## **Details of the proposal**

7 Retention of two on-site workshops and redevelopment of this brownfield site to provide a film studios and related ancillary uses.

## **Case history**

8 On 21 November 2019 a GLA pre-application meeting, attended by the applicant team and representatives from Barking and Dagenham Council, was held to discuss this proposal for the site. The applicant was advised that the redevelopment of this vacant brownfield site, to provide a mix of cultural and office floorspace was strongly supported in principle. The applicant was advised to address issues in respect of urban design, sustainable development and transport.

## **Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance**

9 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan in force for the area comprises the following documents: Barking & Dagenham Core Strategy (2010), Borough Wide Development Policies Development Plan (2011) and Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document (2010); and the London Plan (2016, consolidated with alterations since 2011).

10 The following are also relevant material considerations:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and National Planning Practice Guidance;
- The London Plan Intend to Publish version (December 2019);
- Secretary of State Directions on the Intend to Publish London Plan of 13 March 2020, issued under Section 337 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended); and,
- London Riverside Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2015).

## **Principle of development**

11 GLA officers acknowledge that that the site is allocated in the Local plan as site SSA SM5 Sanofi Aventis site. The AAP envisages that this site should accommodate a mix of uses including employment (B1, B2 and B8). It is further noted that the site is subject to an extant planning consent (2012) for mixed use commercial-led redevelopment.

### Culture and creative uses

12 London Plan Policy 4.6 promotes entertainment and cultural uses, recognising the social and economic benefits that they offer to residents, workers and visitors. Policy HC5 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan seeks to support London's culture and creative industries. Recent research undertaken by the GLA indicates an estimated demand for 177,000 sq.m. additional film studio space in the UK, with London and the southeast expected to maintain its leading position at the forefront of the UK film

industry. Strategically, this site has excellent (and improving) connectivity by rail to central London with this set to improve when the Elizabeth Line is fully operational. The Applicant should engage with potential end users as a priority to provide certainty regarding its design specification and future use to help ensure the successful contribution of this scheme as part of a wider creative offer. Locating a new film studio at this site, which is well connected by public transport, is likely to support the clustering and function of the film industry/supporting infrastructure as part of the modernisation of this former industrial site, and to promote more sustainable travel within the industry. Accordingly, the proposed 6 sound stages and supporting workspace is strongly supported in accordance with the policies outlined above.

### Employment uses

13 Policies E4 and E7 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan seek to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of land and premises in different parts of London to meet current and future demands for industrial and related functions with Policy E7 stating that proposals should be proactive and encourage the intensification of business uses in Use Classes B1c, B2 and B8 occupying all categories of industrial land. As noted at paragraph 5 above the former Sanofi site was previously used for the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, and formed a part of the wider industrial site (a portion of the wider site at the eastern side was allocated as Locally Significant Industrial Land). The site has been cleared of development since approximately 2013 and benefits from an outline consent for a food store which is acknowledged as the prevailing use of the land with the permission commenced. Notwithstanding this, the proposals would re-introduce a use at the site which shares many of the characteristics of storage and distribution and light industrial uses – given the building and yard typologies, and types of movements associated with the film studio and the supporting workshops which are key to this. The industrial type use at this former industrial site would provide a contemporary response to the emerging context at the site which could benefit from the technological and creative uses emerging at the surrounding plots. The proposals are anticipated to deliver 1,202 jobs with the applicant outlining its commitment to fill as many as of these vacancies as possible through local partnerships and skills programmes. It is noted that this employment density is greater than would typically be expected of a supermarket and the ambition to fill these through the local communities is strongly supported.

### Principle of development conclusion

14 The redevelopment of this vacant brownfield site, to provide a mix of film studio and ancillary workspace is strongly supported in principle.

## **Urban design**

### Height and massing

15 London Plan Policies 7.1 and 7.4 and the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan Policies D1 and D2 require development to have regard to the form, function and structure of an area and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings, and Policy D3 promotes the optimisation of a site's capacity, with higher density developments in areas that are well connected to services and public transport. Policy D9 of the Intend to Publish London Plan encourages boroughs to define what constitutes a 'tall building', acknowledging that this is a relative term. The tallest element

of the proposal would be 21 metres with the lowest buildings proposed 10.2 metres. The height of the proposed development responds to the operational requirements of the proposed use and is in broad conformity with the emerging context of the wider site. Having regard also to the heritage and Green Belt assessments below, the massing proposed does not present any strategic design concerns.

### Layout

16 The proposals include a car park at the northern edge of the plot adjacent to Yew Tree Avenue. A secure entrance is provided along Baytree Avenue. The buildings are primarily arranged in an east-west axis with large central masses in the form of the sound stages surrounded by satellite low level supporting office space/workshops. The layout of the site provides the most efficient use of land and allows the development potential of this underutilised vacant brownfield site to be maximised.

### Architecture

17 The sound stages and supporting workshops will have robust built forms which reflect the industrial character of the wider site and retained buildings within the plot. The applicant is advancing a simple elevational treatment of hard wearing light and dark brick plinths for the lower elements of the buildings with profiled sheet metal cladding for the upper elements of the buildings. Whilst the material palette is generally supported, it should be revised where this would allow other policy objectives to be met. For example, green/growing walls may enable the development to more positively respond to the urban greening aspirations set out in Policies G6 and G7 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan (discussed further at paragraph 27).

### Visual impact to the Green Belt

18 London Plan Policy 7.16 and draft London Plan Policy G2 afford Green Belt Land the strongest protection in accordance with national guidance. The NPPF through paragraphs 133-147 affords the strongest possible protection to Green Belt. The NPPF provides that construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate save for certain limited exceptions set out in paragraph 145. Whilst there is no development proposed in the Green Belt, the scheme will abut the Green Belt land which adjoins the site boundary at the southern edge and extends west. The visual impact of the development has been minimised as far is practical through the sensitive use of façade material and building form and the buildings would form a strong urban edge to the wider body of Green Belt. The applicant has provided a series of views from within the Green Belt which demonstrate that whilst the buildings would be a visible addition to the setting of the Green Belt, this impact has been minimised as far as possible within the operational requirements of the site. GLA officers also note that surrounding plots have buildings of comparable scale and height. The impact to the Green Belt is acceptable.

### Heritage

19 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 for development in conservation areas "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or

appearance of that area.” The NPPF states that when considering the impact of the proposal on the significance of the designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. 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.

20 Where a proposed development will lead to ‘substantial harm’ to or total loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, 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, including securing its optimum viable use. Policy HC1 ‘Heritage conservation and growth’ of the Mayor’s Intend to Publish London Plan, as well as London Plan Policy 7.8, state that development should conserve heritage assets and avoid harm, which also applies to non-designated heritage assets. Case law outlines that a finding of harm to the setting of a listed building is a consideration to which the decision maker must give considerable importance and weight.

21 The application site itself does not fall within a conservation area, nor does it contain any listed buildings. However, north of the plot (within the wider former Sanofi site), is the Grade II Listed Canteen at Head Office of Rhone Poulenc Limited. Given the separation distance which exists between the proposed development and the heritage asset, and the scale of the proposals in the existing and emerging context, GLA officers are satisfied that there would be no harm to the setting of the assets and conservation area. This has been fully demonstrated through the submission of a townscape assessment, verified views and heritage statement. GLA officers note the comprehensive redevelopment of the site would make the most efficient use of land and optimise non-residential uses which is supported from a strategic perspective. The proposed scheme it is noted would introduce distinctive, high quality architecture, which is scaled to address the emerging character of the wider site.

#### Agent of change

22 In line with the Mayor’s Intend to Publish London Plan Policy D13 the Council must secure any necessary mitigation measures are in place with respect to noise, vibration and air quality, and in particular to ensure that: i) the proposed creative uses would successfully coexist with the existing employment uses on adjacent plots; and, ii) surrounding businesses/industrial areas would not be compromised by the proposed development in terms of their function, access, servicing and hours of operation.

#### Fire safety

23 In line with policy D12 of the Mayor’s Intend to Publish London Plan, development proposals must achieve the highest standards of fire safety and ensure that they: are designed to incorporate appropriate features which reduce the risk to life in the event of a fire; are constructed in an appropriate way to minimise the risk of fire spread; provide suitable and convenient means of escape for all building users; adopt a robust strategy for evacuation which all building users can have confidence in and provide suitable access and equipment for firefighting which is appropriate for the size

and use of the development. The applicant has submitted a fire strategy produced by a suitably qualified third party assessor which satisfies the requirements of Policy D12 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan.

### Urban design conclusion

24 The design, layout, height and massing of the scheme is acceptable in strategic planning terms and would not cause harm to designated heritage assets. The Council should secure key details of facing materials to ensure a high-quality building is delivered in accordance with London Plan Policies 7.1 and 7.4 and the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan Policies D1 and D2.

## **Sustainable development**

### Energy

25 In accordance with the principles of London Plan Policy 5.2 and Policy SI2 of the Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan, the applicant has submitted an energy statement, setting out how the development proposes to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. In summary the proposed strategy comprises: energy efficiency measures (including a range of passive design features and demand reduction measures). The applicant is not proposing a site-wide heat network but is proposing separate systems consisting of multiple ASHP units to cope with variable and unpredictable heat demand. Further justification is needed for this approach. The applicant should future proof the development for easy connection to a district heat network should one become available. The applicant is proposing renewable technologies, comprising 5,114 sq.m. of photovoltaic panels, 220 sq.m. of solar thermal panels and air source heat pumps. A detailed roof layout has been provided demonstrating that the potential for a PV installation has been maximised. The carbon dioxide saving exceed the on-site target set within Policy 5.2 of the London Plan for non-domestic uses. Detailed comments have been provided separately.

### Flood risk and drainage

26 Insufficient evidence has been provided to determine whether the proposed development complies with London Plan Policy 5.12 and the Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan Policy SI.12. The surface water drainage strategy for the proposed development does not comply with London Plan Policy 5.13 and the Mayor's Intend to Publish SI.13, as it does not give appropriate regard to the drainage hierarchy and greenfield runoff rate. Further details on how SuDS measures at the top of the drainage hierarchy will be included in the development, and additional greenfield runoff calculations should be provided. The proposed development generally meets the requirements of London Plan Policy 5.15 and the Mayor's Intend to Publish SI.5. The Applicant should also consider water harvesting and reuse to reduce consumption of wholesome water across the entire development site. This can be integrated with the surface water drainage system to provide a dual benefit.

### Urban greening

27 London Plan Policy 5.10 and the Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan Policy G5 state that developments should provide new green infrastructure that contributes to urban greening. Policy G5 also sets out a new Urban Greening Factor (UGF) to identify



the appropriate amount of urban greening required in new developments. The Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan Policy G6 further states that proposals that create new or improved habitats that result in positive gains for biodiversity should be considered positively. London Plan Policy 7.21 and the Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan Policy G7 seek to protect existing trees of value, which should be retained where possible or otherwise replaced. The applicant has calculated their UGF score as 0.076, which falls significantly below the target of 0.3 for commercial development set by Policy G5 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan, and is therefore contrary to policy. The applicant notes that green roofs and green walls were investigated but have not been incorporated due to viability concerns; however, green roofs are one of the principal ways in which industrial developments such as this can achieve the required UGF score, and given the proposed development does not currently meet the target score of 0.3 the applicant should reconsider ways in which green roofs could be incorporated across all buildings to improve the UGF.

28 The Mid Beam Valley in Dagenham and Dagenham Lake Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) lies to the south of the railway line, south of the Site. Impacts on this SINC have been assessed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and it is concluded there would be no harm to the SINC should standard industry good practice guidelines be followed.

### Circular economy

29 Policy S17 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan seeks to ensure that referable applications promote circular economy principles and promotes the re-use and/or recycling of building, construction and demolition materials and minimise resource use and waste. The application responds positively to these aims by refurbishing, repairing and restoring 2 existing buildings and bringing these into optimum viable use as part of a comprehensive heritage and cultural-led long-term regeneration strategy. The re-use of existing buildings responds well to the principles of Policy S17 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan.

## **Transport**

### Active travel

30 The Active Travel Zone assessment supplied does not address the matters of relevance to a workplace. Notwithstanding, it does identify some positive interventions but specifically refuses to consider funding them, contrary to Policy T2 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan. An appropriate assessment should be secured, and agreement over funding of improvements should be negotiated with the Council.

### Vehicle parking

31 London Plan Policy 6.13 and the Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan Policy T6 require developments to provide the appropriate level of car parking provision. A total of 350 parking spaces are proposed, taking up a significant proportion of the site contrary to Policy D3. The quantum of on-site car parking should be reduced to reflect the lower employment densities which arise from the proposed use. Notwithstanding this, the need for a level of operational parking is acknowledged, subject to supporting evidence as to the quantum and of the nature of the operational requirements.

### Cycle parking

32 Cycle parking should be provided to be in line with the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan standards, contained within Table 10.2. Cycle parking design should be in accordance with London Cycle Design Standards (LCDS). The proposed quantum of cycle parking meets the Mayor's intend to publish target, the applicant must provide further detail to confirm compliance with Policy T5 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan and LCDS. Once compliance is confirmed the quantum and design must be secured by way of planning condition.

### Transport impacts

33 No evidence has been provided to support the trip generation. The movement of servicing and operational vehicles should also be quantified. Modelling of the Rainham Road South junction may be necessary to establish the expected impacts from commuter and operational parking and servicing and any necessary mitigation.

### Travel plan, construction logistics and delivery and servicing

34 A travel plan should be secured through any future Section 106 agreement. A Delivery and Service Plan and construction logistics plan must be secured by condition.

### Transport conclusion

35 The applicant must resolve issues in respect of; trip generation, active travel and vehicle and cycle parking. The Council must secure a construction logistics plan, a travel plan, a delivery and servicing plan and active travel improvements.

## **Local planning authority's position**

36 The local planning authority is currently assessing the application and is yet to identify a target committee date.

## **Legal considerations**

37 Under the arrangements set out in Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor is required to provide the local planning authority with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. Unless notified otherwise by the Mayor, the Council must consult the Mayor again under Article 5 of the Order if it subsequently resolves to make a draft decision on the application, in order that the Mayor may decide whether to allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged, or direct the Council under Article 6 of the Order to refuse the application, or issue a direction under Article 7 of the Order that he is to act as the local planning authority for the purpose of determining the application and any connected application. There is no obligation at this present stage for the Mayor to indicate his intentions regarding a possible direction, and no such decision should be inferred from the Mayor's statement and comments.

## **Financial considerations**

38 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

## Conclusion

39 The policies of the London Plan and the Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan policies on employment land, creative uses, urban design, heritage, energy, flood risk and drainage, urban greening and transport are relevant to this application. The following strategic planning issues should be addressed to ensure compliance with the London Plan and the Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan:

- **Principle of development:** The redevelopment of this vacant brownfield site, providing a mix of film studio and ancillary workspace is strongly supported in principle.
- **Urban design and heritage:** The design, layout, height and massing of the scheme is acceptable in strategic planning terms, and the response to Green Belt context and local heritage assets is also acceptable. The Council should secure key details of facing materials.
- **Sustainable development:** Further discussion is required in relation to the applicant's energy strategy, flood risk and drainage assessment and urban greening.
- **Transport:** The applicant must resolve issues in respect of; trip generation, active travel and vehicle and cycle parking. The Council must secure a construction logistics plan, a travel plan, a delivery and servicing plan and active travel improvements.

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