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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local  
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BY EMAIL ONLY

Case Officer: Mrs Katherine Parkin  
Direct Line: 01474 337 523  
Email: katherine.parkin@gravesham.gov.uk  
My Ref: 20221064  
Your Ref:  
Date: 7 November 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: REFERRAL TO SECRETARY OF STATE**

**REFERENCE NO:** 20221064

**SITE ADDRESS:** Northfleet Harbourside - Land Surrounding Ebbsfleet United Football Club, Stonebridge Road, Northfleet

**DESCRIPTION:** Outline planning application with all matters reserved, except for the primary means of access and road layout, for a phased mixed-use redevelopment involving the demolition of existing buildings and structures including site preparation / remediation works, and the development of residential units (Use Class C3), Class E uses including floorspace for retail Class E(a)), food/beverage and drinking establishments (Use Class E(b)), local services (Use Class E(c)), indoor sport/recreation/fitness (use Class E(d)), healthcare space (Use Class E(e)), creche/nursery uses (Use Class E(f)), office floorspace (Use Class E(g)(i)), a new multi-use stadium with associated business and leisure facilities (sui generis), hotel (Use Class C1), community uses floorspace (Use Class F2). The phased redevelopment will include other sui generis uses, delivery of open space and significant realignment of the road network including the A226 Galley Hill Road / Stonebridge Road / Lower Road with hard / soft landscaping, car and cycle parking provisions, infrastructure works, ancillary and associated works.

I write with reference to the above application and its referral to the Secretary of State as a departure from the development plan under Paragraph 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024.

The planning application was considered by the Council's Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday 30 April 2024.

The decision of the Planning Committee was as follows:

*RESOLVED that the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair is given delegated authority to issue the planning PERMISSION and impose conditions and informatives, subject to:*

- *The finalisation of the Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 63 the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as*

- amended)) by the Borough Council in its role as the competent authority and planning permission only be granted if the outcome of that assessment concludes that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of applicable European Sites (i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), proposed SACs, potential SPAs, Ramsar sites - wetlands of international importance (both listed and proposed), and areas secured as sites compensating for damage to a European site).
- National Grid removing their holding objection;
- Completion of a legal agreement under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
- Referral of the application to the Secretary of State as a departure from the adopted Development Plan.

*That the Head of Planning is given delegated authority to make changes to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions, informatives, planning obligations or reasons for the decision) prior to the decision being actioned, provided that the Head of Planning is satisfied that any such changes could not reasonably be regarded as deviating from the overall principle of the decision reached by the Committee nor that such change(s) could reasonably have led to a different decision having been reached by the Committee.*

*However, in the event that the Shadow Habitats Regulation Assessment cannot be finalised or it concludes that the proposal will result in adverse effects on the integrity of any of the sites in question the application is to be reported back to Planning Committee for review and redetermination.*

*In the event that National Grid do not remove their holding objection, the application is to be reported back to Planning Committee for review and redetermination.*

*In the event that the Section 106 Legal Agreement remains unsigned six months after this resolution, the application is to be reviewed by the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, and if no progress is being made, delegated authority is to be given to the Head of Planning to refuse the application in the absence of an agreed S106 Agreement.*

Further to the above resolution, I can confirm the following:

- The Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment has been finalised and is included within the application documents.
- National Grid have agreed to remove their holding objection further to the applicant entering into an Assess Protection Agreement and welcome the inclusion of a Grampian planning condition on this basis.
- The draft S106 legal agreement and draft conditions have been shared with the applicant and work on these documents is still ongoing.

The application as proposed to be granted is a departure from the adopted development plan and does not fully accord with the provisions, in particular, of Policies CS07 (Economy, Employment and Skills) and CS08 (Retail, Leisure and the Hierarchy of Centres) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Policies CSM 5 (Land-won Mineral Safeguarding) and DM 7 (Safeguarding Mineral Resources) of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2020).

In accordance with the referral procedures and notably paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 I am required to consult with the Secretary of State and to provide the following documents:

(a) A copy of the application and all documents and plans

The planning application, including all accompanying plans and supporting information, is available to view on the following link:

[https://gravesham-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/richard\\_hart\\_gravesham\\_gov\\_uk/EnSPUeB1NnZEpGKEuohFjxUBOmrvog4sxVfKQTFGTagVuQ?e=VymiMW](https://gravesham-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/richard_hart_gravesham_gov_uk/EnSPUeB1NnZEpGKEuohFjxUBOmrvog4sxVfKQTFGTagVuQ?e=VymiMW)

(See Planning Application 20221064 folders.)

(b) A copy of the requisite notice

This is the notice of departure from the development plan as published on site and in the local newspaper.

Both the original notice and the revised notice following the receipt of revised plans and revised information are included in the planning application link (see Site Notices folder).

(c) Copy of representations received

Neighbour responses and internal and external consultee responses are included in the planning application link.

The main and supplementary Committee reports, including Appendices 1 and 2, set out the extent of the consultation and neighbour responses that have been received. The responses are included in the planning application link (see Committee Documents and Internal, External and Neighbour Responses folders).

(d) Copies of Officer Reports

A copy of the final Committee report and the supplementary Committee report heard at the Special Meeting of the Council's Planning Committee on 30 April 2024 can be found in the planning application link (See Committee Documents folder).

(e) Statement of Material Considerations

It is my view that the Committee reports adequately cover the requirements of part (e).

Please confirm that I have provided you with all the requisite information pursuant to paragraph 12 of the Direction or if there is any further information that you require.

I look forward to your response within or after the 21 day period confirming that you do not intend to issue a direction under Section 77 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 and as such that the Local Planning Authority may proceed to determine the application.

Should you have any queries please contact the Case Officer on the number or email address given above.

Yours faithfully,

**Planning and Regeneration Services**