



Managing Development DPD Public Examination

Position Statements prepared on behalf of Safestore Limited

04.09.2012

- 1.1 The following Position Statements set out why the Managing Development DPD (the 'DPD') and the accompanying LDF Proposals Map is unsound and provides a recommendation to the Inspector outlining how the DPD could be amended to be made sound. It should be read in conjunction with the representations submitted on behalf of Safestore on 15 July 2011 and 09 March 2012.
- 1.2 Safestore own a site in Whitechapel which is bound to the north by Raven Row, to the south by Stepney Way, to the east by Sidney Street, and to the west by neighbouring properties fronting onto Cavell Street (the 'Safestore site'). A site plan is attached for information.
- 1.3 Position Statements are set out below on the following parts of the DPD and accompanying LDF Proposals Map:

Position Statement 1 in relation to Issue 2 and the Proposed Whitechapel District Centre Boundary

What particular part of the document is unsound?

- 1.4 The proposed Whitechapel District Centre boundary as shown on the LDF Proposals Map is unsound.

Which soundness tests does it fail?

- 1.5 It is unsound because it is not effective.

Why does it fail?

- 1.6 The proposed Whitechapel District Centre boundary is considered to be unsound because it will not effectively ensure the delivery of the aim of Core Strategy Policy SP01(1d) of enhancing existing district centres and the Core Strategy Vision for Whitechapel (LAP 3 & 4) for it to become '*a thriving regional hub set along the historic*



and vibrant Whitechapel Road. It will be home to a bustling, diverse economy offering a variety of job opportunities for local people and capitalising on the benefits brought about by the 2012 Olympic Games, the Royal London Hospital Expansion, Crossrail and the London Overground'.

- 1.7 The Safestore site is identified within the Core Strategy (Whitechapel Vision, LAP 3 & 4, Figure 49. Whitechapel Vision Diagram) within an area identified for 'Regeneration of identified development sites to make better use of land'. The existing building already proves local storage for market traders and already therefore has a role to play as a critical part of the District Centre.
- 1.8 The Core Strategy identifies as a Priority within the Whitechapel Vision the need to 'Reinforce its regional role by providing more housing, and redeveloping identified areas'
- 1.9 The Core Strategy Policy SP01(4b) encourages as a priority 17,700sqm (net) floorspace of convenience retail to be delivered across a number of town centres across the borough, including in Whitechapel.
- 1.10 The Core Strategy makes reference to the Whitechapel Masterplan (2007) as being the basis for the delivery and co-ordination of the opportunities that are identified for Whitechapel. This document identifies a much larger area as the place of Whitechapel and includes the Safestore site within its 'Core Masterplan Area' boundary whilst also identifying part of the site as a 'Potential Development Site'.
- 1.11 We contend that the Safestore site is an important opportunity site that can contribute to meeting the above policy aims of the Core Strategy and growth ambition for Whitechapel and ensuring that these aims are effectively met. In fact, it is one of only a handful of opportunity sites that could realise the delivery of this vision.
- 1.12 We also note that the site immediately adjacent to the north of the Safestore site at the junction of Raven Row and Sidney Street, and which shares the urban block with it, has been included within the District Centre boundary. This is a recognition on the borough's behalf of the contribution that sites in this part of Whitechapel can make to the improvement of the District Centre. We argue the close proximity of the Safestore site, and the fact that it shares similar location characteristics, means that it should also be included within the District Centre boundary.



- 1.13 We consider it appropriate for the Safestore site to be included within the proposed District Centre boundary on the basis that it has been identified in the Core Strategy within an area identified as being appropriate to come forward for redevelopment to contribute to the regeneration of Whitechapel.
- 1.14 Whitechapel has the potential to perform a greater role as the planned regeneration of the area takes hold and the potential benefits arising from its status as a Sub-Regional Interchange for London Underground, Overground and Crossrail services as identified in Core Strategy Policy SP08(1b) begin to materialise.
- 1.15 We argue that as one of the largest potential development sites that is available within Whitechapel, the Safestore site presents a significant opportunity to contribute to meeting the Core Strategy's key aims for the regeneration of Whitechapel. There are few sites of a similar scale available that contribute as significantly as the Safestore site to the achievement of borough's place making objectives for Whitechapel.
- 1.16 We consider that the opportunity that the site presents can be best realised by including it within the proposed District Centre boundary thereby enabling maximum flexibility to be retained over its future use to ensure that its contribution to the Core Strategy's place making aspirations for Whitechapel when its redevelopment comes forward at the appropriate time.
- 1.17 We conclude that, without the inclusion of the Safestore site within its boundary, the proposed Whitechapel District Centre will not be effective in contributing to the delivery of the Core Strategy's place making aims for Whitechapel and will therefore be unsound.

How could the document be made sound?

- 1.18 The LDF Proposals Map could be made sound by including the Safestore site within the proposed boundary of the Whitechapel District Centre.

What is the precise change/wording sought?

- 1.19 The boundary should be amended to include the Safestore site.



Position Statement 2 in relation to Issue 3 and the Proposed Whitechapel Local Office Location Boundary, Policy DM15 and DM16

Background

- 1.20 A meeting was held with LBTH officers on 21 August 2012 to discuss, amongst other areas, the proposed designation of the Safestore site within the proposed Whitechapel Local Office Location (LOL) boundary. Policies DM15 Local Job Creation and Investment and DM16 Office Locations were also discussed at this meeting.
- 1.21 LBTH will submit to the Public Examination a Statement of Common Ground reached with Safestore in relation to matters agreed and matters that remain outstanding between both parties.
- 1.22 Following the meeting, LBTH propose to amend the LOL boundary to exclude the Safestore site. As such, Part 2 of Policy DM16 which relates to designated spatial policy areas would no longer apply to the Safestore site. Policy DM15 would be used, alongside other relevant policies, to manage the potential future redevelopment of the site.
- 1.23 In representations made on behalf of Safestore during the previous public consultations, we have not sought to comment on Policy DM15 as it was not relevant to their land interests at that time.
- 1.24 Given the late changes now proposed to the LOL boundary, it is considered appropriate that the following comments in respect of Policy DM15 made on behalf of Safestore be considered at the Public Examination.

What particular part of the document is unsound?

- 1.25 Part 1 of Policy DM15 as currently drafted is unsound.

Which soundness tests does it fail?

- 1.26 It is unsound because it is not effective.



Why does it fail?

- 1.27 It would fail to deliver the objective of Core Strategy Policy SP06 to maximise and deliver investment and job creation in the Borough by unnecessarily protecting existing employment floorspace which is vacant or underused and which could instead be used for alternative uses, which could include a range of alternative employment generating uses.
- 1.28 Policy DM15 would through the requirement to actively market sites for approximately 12 months delay the ability of these sites to come forward sooner for alternative use where this is the most appropriate solution.
- 1.29 Where an employment facility is no longer correctly sized to market and where investment is currently driven to qualitative improvement and quantitative rationalisation of employment floorspace provision, the policy as drafted discourages this behaviour. Therefore, where it can be demonstrated that the redevelopment of employment land delivers qualitative benefits that outweigh the quantitative loss of floorspace, the marketing tests should not apply.
- 1.30 In the case of Whitechapel specifically, and the contribution that existing employment sites could make to its regeneration, such as the Safestore site, it is considered that the policy requirement to market vacant employment floorspace over a c. 12 month period would frustrate the ability of currently underused employment sites to contribution fully to meeting the key aims and objectives identified in the Core Strategy's Vision for Whitechapel.

How could the document be made sound?

- 1.31 Part 1 of Policy DM15 could be made sound by making amendments to the policy to introduce a greater level of flexibility such that where an existing employment site is proposed for redevelopment, it would either need to actively marketed for a 12 month period or there would be a requirement to produce evidence that demonstrates that a building is incapable of viable refurbishment or redevelopment for continued employment use.



What is the precise change/wording sought?

1.32 Part 1 of Policy DM15 should be amended to read as follows:

“The upgrading and redevelopment of employment sites outside of spatial policy areas will be supported. Development should not result in the loss of active and viable employment uses, unless it can be shown, through a marketing exercise, that the site has been actively marketed (for approximately 12 months) or that the site is demonstrated as being unsuitable for viable refurbishment or redevelopment for continued employment use due to its location, accessibility, size and condition.”

1.33 The inclusion of this suggested amendment would ensure that the policy could effectively deliver the objectives of the Core Strategy as they relate to the use of existing employment sites and the regeneration of Whitechapel.