

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and

The Acquisition of Land Act 1981

Public Local Inquiry into:

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL (LAND AT HENBURY WAY, OXHEY DRIVE, BRIDLINGTON ROAD, ST ANDREWS ROAD, THE PARADE, PRESTWICK ROAD, FAIRFIELD AVENUE AND STATION APPROACH, SOUTH OXHEY) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2016

Summary Statement of Evidence

Pursuant to Rule 15 of

The Compulsory Purchase (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2007

of

Alan William Head

Head of Major Projects

On behalf of Three Rivers District Council

On matters relating to the need for regeneration and the evolution of the project.

28 October 2016

CONTENTS

Clause		Page
1.	QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE.....	3
2.	SCOPE OF EVIDENCE	3
3.	BACKGROUND TO THE SOUTH OXHEY INITIATIVE.....	4
4.	THE COUNCIL'S DECISION TO MAKE THE CPO	4
5.	THE BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME	5
6.	EVIDENCE FROM OTHER WITNESSES.....	5
7.	CONCLUSIONS	5

1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1.1 I have a degree in Civil Engineering from Swansea University and subsequently qualified as a Chartered Building Surveyor. I have over 30 years' experience in the private and public property development sector.
- 1.2 I have been employed by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC), the Acquiring Authority, since the beginning of 2009 and am Head of the Major Projects section of the Council, having previously been Head of Asset Management. In my current role I am accountable for the direction and viability of the Council's major development and construction projects, facilitating regeneration, multi-tenure housing and other commercial activities. For the past five years I have been the Lead Officer for the South Oxhey Initiative (SOI) thus taking the project from its strategic planning origins, through the concept and procurement stages to the current day with a Developer in contract to deliver the agreed scheme.

2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 In my evidence I set out:-
- 2.1.1 a description of the Order Land and the need for regeneration (Section 3);
 - 2.1.2 the background to the South Oxhey Initiative and public engagement (Section 4);
 - 2.1.3 the procurement process and selection of the preferred developer (Sections 5 and 6);
 - 2.1.4 making the CPO and appropriation of land for planning purposes (Section 7);
 - 2.1.5 project funding and delivery (Section 8),
 - 2.1.6 the benefits of the Scheme and other initiatives in South Oxhey (Sections 9 and 10);
 - 2.1.7 the response to Thrive Home's objections (Section 11) and
 - 2.1.8 my conclusions (Section 12).
- 2.2 The Council is the majority freeholder of the Order Land which contains some 78 commercial outlets and 127 residential units, the majority of which are occupied by tenants of Thrive Homes. South Oxhey is essentially a large urban estate almost exclusively made up of Council built properties, although many of these flats and houses are now privately owned. The estate was built primarily in the 1950's to help alleviate housing pressures in London.
- 2.3 In addition to the Order Land there are three other sites in the SOI, known as the Satellite Sites, which form part of the project but do not require a CPO.

- 2.4 Central parts of South Oxhey now have the appearance of a run-down estate with inadequate housing and outmoded shops all in need of regeneration. These parts of South Oxhey are defined as one of the 10% most deprived in England.
- 2.5 The Order Land is in two parts, the larger main area containing the shopping precinct at street level with up to three storeys of residential above, and a smaller area at Station Approach, adjoining Carpenders Park Station, which is predominately single storey retail units.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE SOUTH OXHEY INITIATIVE

- 3.1 The Local Plan includes a number of policies relating to South Oxhey and the Core Strategy recognises the need for regeneration. Reports from Terence O'Rourke established the outcome from public dialogue at various consultation events. The most popular options to be pursued were, complete refurbishment or complete redevelopment.
- 3.2 Two reports commissioned from Lambert Smith Hampton appraised the properties, considered the refurbishment options and the principle and viability of a comprehensive development scheme. The Council ultimately concluded that regeneration should be in the form of complete redevelopment.
- 3.3 A procurement process ensued and a preferred developer, Countryside Properties Ltd working with Home Group, was ultimately appointed after due process.

4. THE COUNCIL'S DECISION TO MAKE THE CPO

- 4.1 The Council has complied with its public sector duty under the Equality Act 2000. As part of that process the Council's Community Partnerships Unit carried out a "Form A" Relevance Test in accordance with the Council's Equality Policy. In summary, this concluded that no protected groups were likely to be negatively affected by the CPO. The Council also reviewed land in its ownership and appropriated land for planning purposes to ensure delivery of the Scheme including development of the Satellite Sites.
- 4.2 The extent of the development was agreed at the Policy & Resources Committee on 21st July 2015 and the terms of the Development Agreement were approved for exchange between the parties at the Council's Policy & Resources committee and then Full Council on 2nd November 2015. On 21st March 2016 the Council formally resolved to make the Order.
- 4.3 The commerciality of the Development Agreement between the Council and the Developers is predicated upon a risk sharing approach whereby the Council take responsibility for funding the acquisition and delivering vacant possession of the site and the developers are tasked with maximising value from the scheme and paying an income made up from phased fixed capital receipts, ground rent and potentially an overage for the land to be transferred.

5. THE BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME

- 5.1 The proposed redevelopment will improve the quality of life of those living and working in the South Oxhey area by making significant improvements to housing conditions, renewing and enhancing the area's economic vitality and halting the degeneration of the current shopping centre. The new facilities will contain an anchor foodstore and will be more physically attractive and varied to win back shoppers being lost to other centres.
- 5.2 The scheme will also contribute to the social well-being of South Oxhey by creating high quality public spaces, such as Market Square; provide a significant number of new homes built to modern standards thus benefiting residents in terms of accessibility, energy efficiency and choice of tenure, as well as being designed to enhance the environmental well-being by reinforcing the district centre in terms of density.
- 5.3 The Council is participating, to varying degrees, in three other projects which build on the outworking of the SO Initiative. These are variously referred to as the SO Leisure Centre, the Health Hub and the development of properties on Oxhey Drive. These initiatives will add to the benefits which the SOI will realise.

6. EVIDENCE FROM OTHER WITNESSES

- 6.1 My evidence introduces that of other witnesses in support of the Order and it is clear from the collective statements that there is a very strong case for the Order and good reason for it to progress. The evidence includes the fact that the Council has entered into a full contractual arrangement with Countryside and Home Group to secure the delivery of the redevelopment, further detail of which is provided by Mike Woolliscroft.
- 6.2 Negotiations with those affected by the Order are well advanced and the project has the support of planning policy with the planning permission already being implemented. Evidence in response to objections from Thrive Homes is provided by me and the objections from all others are addressed by Graeme Lawes.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it is my opinion, based on the evidence given by the other witnesses and me on behalf of the Council as Acquiring Authority, that there is a compelling case in the public interest, that it will contribute to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area and that the terms of the 2015 Circular have been complied with. On this basis I respectfully request the Order be confirmed.