

Inquiry into the  
The London Borough of Southwark (Aylesbury Estate Wolverton 1-59) (No 2) Compulsory  
Purchase Order 2012

Proof of evidence of Ms Elaine Taylor BA (Hons), CIHM

For the London Borough of Southwark

## Contents

1. Qualifications and experience
2. Scope of Evidence
3. Delivery of the scheme
4. Funding
5. Construction
6. Summary and Conclusions

## **1. Qualifications and Experience**

1.1 My name is Elaine Taylor. I have a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Social Studies from the University of Hull and a Postgraduate Diploma in Housing Association Development Management from Westminster University. I have over 22 years experience working in housing development for Registered Providers of Social Housing being principally involved in acquiring and developing land.

1.2 I have worked in a senior position at London & Quadrant Housing Trust for the last 8 years. I am currently the Senior Regeneration and Development Manager, a position that I have held for 8 months. Prior to this I was a Senior Land and Development Manager for 4 years. I was Regional Development Manager for Tower Homes, a wholly owned subsidiary of London & Quadrant Housing Trust, for 4 years.

1.3 My experience in the sector of Registered Providers ("RP") also includes 3 years as Regional Development Manager at Affinity, 18 months as Development Manager for Hyde Housing Association, 7 years as Development Manager for Croydon Churches Housing Association and 3 years at London and Quadrant Housing Trust starting as a Development Officer then, following promotion, Senior Development Officer.

1.4 As Senior Regeneration and Development Manager, I am responsible for progressing the land purchase from LB Southwark and, working with colleagues at L&Q, delivering the development of new homes in accordance with planning application number 12/AP/2332 at 1-59 Wolverton, Aylesbury Estate.

1.5 My principal responsibility is to secure regeneration projects in line with L&Q's business plan. This involves identifying and bidding for regeneration schemes and achieving future business growth for the organisation. My role also includes responsibility for setting, managing and controlling budgets against the business plan.

1.6 I oversaw the team which successfully bid for the acquisition of 1-59 Wolverton and its redevelopment proposals.

## **2. Scope of evidence**

2.1 This proof of evidence should be read alongside the Council's Statement of Case. My proof deals with the implementation of the scheme and covers the following issues:

- Delivery of the scheme
- Funding for the scheme
- Construction

### **3. Delivery of the scheme**

3.1 The Council's selection of L&Q to deliver this scheme is described in detail in the Council's Statement of Case (CD 8 at paragraphs 1.6 to 1.8). This refers to the Council's requirement to deliver the scheme within reasonable timescales.

3.2 L&Q's financial statements for 2011/12 are annexed at Appendix 1 and these report that L&Q owns and manages over 68,000 homes (page 7) and has a further 10,000 homes in the development pipeline (page 24).

3.3 As set out in paragraph 7.2.1 of the AAAP (CD 12), L&Q is currently on site on Aylesbury Phase 1a in the South West Corner of the estate. The evidence of Ms Jane Seymour describes the location of Phase 1a which is shown on the map annexed to Ms Seymour's evidence at Appendix 1 to that proof. L&Q began work in 2009 to deliver the 261 new homes, day centre and 3 commercial units in Phase 1a in 2009. The day centre and 52 new homes were completed in spring 2011. A further 18 homes were completed in April 2012 with 131 completing during March 2013. The remaining 60 homes from this phase are due for completion in August 2013.

3.4 Residents, including 15 decanted from the existing Aylesbury Estate, have already moved in. A further 33 households from the existing Aylesbury Estate will move in during March.

3.5 We have received very positive feedback from the residents who have moved into the new homes. Our news story in South East Neighbourhood News (Doors Open to New Homes on Historic Southwark Site 11/7/2011 annexed at Appendix 2) contains the following quote from new resident, Mrs Gilchrist, "I think my new home is wonderful, I was a bit dubious about the move at the beginning, because I'd lived in Chartridge for 35 years but the help with the move was excellent and I'm absolutely delighted. Everything came fitted, including the kitchen appliances and the rooms are spacious. I have managed to stay in touch with my old neighbours - I still see them at the shops and we still chat to each other."

3.6 As referred to in Ms Seymour's evidence Cllr Paul Noblet sets out the vision for the Aylesbury Estate in the Foreword to the AAAP (CD 12).

"The Aylesbury Area Action Plan provides a blueprint for the ambitious regeneration of the Aylesbury Estate over the next 20 years. It will see the area transformed with new high quality homes, schools, roads, parks and open spaces" (AAAP page 3 para 1).

L&Q is committed to delivering this vision for high quality homes and working with the Council to transform the Aylesbury Estate.

3.7 Phase 1a has been credited with the following awards and nominations:

- Affordable Home Ownership Awards 2012 – Best Design – winner (<http://www.lqgroup.org.uk/services-for-residents/media-centre/press-releases/>) (press release dated 10 October 2012)
- Affordable Home Ownership Awards 2012 – Best Regeneration Project – Commendation (<http://www.lqgroup.org.uk/services-for-residents/media-centre/press-releases/>) press release dated 10 October 2012 – referred to in notes to Editor) (other press releases in respect of L&Q's work at Aylesbury dated 13 November and 19 February 2013 under the same link)
- London Planning Awards 2012/13 – Best New Place to Live – Winner - see certificate
- Housing Design Awards 2008 – Project Scheme – Shortlisted <http://www.hdawards.org/archive/2008/shortlist/project.html>
- Aside from L&Q's own press release, the scheme has also been featured in Building Magazine in an article entitled "Aylesbury Estate- taking back the streets" – details of these nominations, awards, articles and press releases are annexed at Appendix 3

3.8 L&Q has worked closely with the Council since 2009 to deliver this scheme and I therefore believe that L&Q understands the Council's requirements and the process for delivery.

3.9 Following L&Q's selection as the Council's partner for site 7, the Council and L&Q entered into an agreement ("the L&Q agreement") to set out how the development would proceed. A redacted version of the L&Q agreement is CD 21 and is described in more detail in Ms Seymour's evidence.

3.10 L&Q worked closely with the Council during the pre-planning stage to develop a scheme that met the Council's requirements. L&Q submitted a planning application (CD 17) for the demolition and redevelopment of the site on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012. The Council's Planning Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012 resolved to grant approval to this application, subject to the signing of a S106 agreement. A copy of the Committee Report is CD18. The planning decision notice is dated 19 February 2013 and is CD 19. The s106 Agreement was signed on 19 February 2013 and is CD20. Further detail about the planning application is included in the proof of evidence of Tim Cutts.

3.11 L&Q is currently liaising with UKPN and other utilities providers regarding potential service disconnections and diversionary works. L&Q has already paid £981,898 in this regard to ensure that works can commence as soon as the Council grants vacant possession.

3.12 L&Q is the developer for the scheme and has developed a construction programme for delivery of the scheme (annexed at Appendix 4). This shows a 116 week programme to complete the 147 homes on the site. This programme has been developed by the Construction Manager of L&Q's direct procurement team and approved by the Managing Director (Stuart Miller BSc MRICS and MCIOB) of this team. They have 46 combined years experience of working in the construction industry. As mentioned in 3.3 of my proof of evidence the programme for Phase 1a provided for the phased delivery of 261 homes and community resource centre. These are being delivered as follows:

- 52 homes and the resource centre in site 1a have already been completed in line with an 81 week programme
- 149 homes and 3 commercial units in sites 1b,1c and 1e are being delivered, also in line with an 81 week programme
- 60 homes in site 1d are on target to be delivered in accordance with a 75 week programme.

I am confident that the programme for this site is a similarly deliverable programme.

3.13 L&Q has one of the largest development programmes in the London and the South East and a strong track record for delivery. I have annexed to this proof of evidence at Appendix 5 some brochures and other information about some of our completed schemes. L&Q has a contractual obligation to deliver a programme of 1800 homes to the GLA through its grant backed Affordable Homes Programme 2011-15. Subject to the scheme meeting the

timetable for grant, we intend to include the affordable homes at 1-59 Wolverton in this programme.

3.14 I confirm that L&Q will commence the construction of the new homes at 1-59 Wolverton as soon as possible once vacant possession is granted.

3.15 By delivering the scheme, L&Q will be contributing to the delivery of infrastructure across the estate as a whole in line with Policy D2 set out in on page 75 of the AAAP. Contributions will be made by way of s106 agreement. A copy of the s106 Agreement is CD 20 and is considered further in Mr Cutts's evidence.

#### **4. Funding**

4.1 As reported in the Council's Statement of Case (CD 8) at paragraph 8, L&Q has a history of strong financial performance. This is evidenced in the Financial Statements annexed at Appendix 1 which confirm that during 2011/12 L&Q made a surplus of £95m (page 12) from turnover of £368m (page 12). L&Q's ability to consistently post positive financial results and demonstrate financial strength gives comfort not only to its lenders but also to credit rating agencies. L&Q is rated by Standard & Poor's at AA (copy report annexed at Appendix 6)

4.2 L&Q has in place loan facilities totalling £2.1bn of which £223m is unutilised and immediately available for drawing (Appendix 7 Treasury Response to Development Bids page 1). L&Q has available capacity of £1.8 billion which enables us to deliver a development programme of between 1,500 – 2,000 homes per year (Appendix 7 Treasury Response to Development Bids page 3).

4.3 L&Q has obtained all the necessary internal approvals to proceed with this scheme. Funding for the total scheme cost of £37m is therefore underwritten by L&Q.

#### **5. Construction**

5.1 L&Q will use its direct procurement team in the Development and Sales Division to procure the construction of the new homes, infrastructure and open space on this site. We will not incur delays through externally tendering the scheme. The team currently comprises 27 members of staff and includes a newly appointed Site Manager, John Weller, who will take responsibility for this particular site. The team has:

- Commenced preparation to discharge pre-commencement planning conditions

- Obtained demolition quotes for Council approval
- Established contact with UKPN and now received a quote for the removal of UKPN equipment from the site and termination of their lease (6/11/12). The acceptance forms were issued to UKPN on 19 November 2012. We are now in direct liaison with UKPN regarding lifting their objection to the CPO.
- Held design workshops with the architects to progress construction drawings.

In short, L&Q is gearing up to commence work on site as soon as vacant possession is provided by the Council.

## 6. Summary and conclusions

6.1 Circular 06/2004 (Compulsory Purchase and the Crichef Down Rules) ("the Circular") (CD 4) states at paragraph 19 that if an acquiring authority does not have a clear idea of how it intends to use the land which it is proposing to acquire, and cannot show that all the necessary resources are likely to be available to achieve that end within a reasonable time-scale, it will be difficult to show conclusively that the compulsory acquisition of the land included in the order is justified in the public interest. The evidence of Mr Cutts and Ms Seymour shows that the Council already has a clear idea of how the Order Land is to be used, as set out in L&Q's scheme documents and planning application. My evidence shows that L&Q has the necessary resources available to achieve that end within a reasonable time scale.

6.2 The Circular goes on to say at paragraph 20 that an acquiring authority should provide as much justification as possible about the resource implications of both acquiring the land and implementing the scheme for which the land is required. My evidence, read in conjunction with Ms Seymour's evidence, confirms how the acquisition and development of the land is to be funded.

6.3 At paragraph 21 of the Circular, it says that the timing of the availability of funding is likely to be a relevant factor. The Circular states that it would only be in exceptional (and fully justified) circumstances that it might be reasonable to acquire land where there was little prospect of implementing the scheme for a number of years. Even more importantly, the confirming Minister would expect to be reassured that it was anticipated that adequate funding would be available to enable the authority to complete the compulsory acquisition within the statutory period following confirmation of the order [3 years]. As will be seen from



my evidence, the funding for implementing the scheme is already available, with significant funding having already been expended. Implementation of the scheme can commence as soon as vacant possession has been achieved and it is L&Q's intention to begin work on site as soon as possible.

6.4 One of the four factors the Secretary of State can be expected to consider when deciding whether to confirm an order is the financial viability of the scheme for which the land is being acquired, as set out in paragraph 16 (iii) of Appendix A to the Circular. The Circular states that a general indication of funding intentions and of any commitments from third parties will usually suffice to reassure the Secretary of State that there is a reasonable prospect that the scheme will proceed. In my evidence and the evidence of Ms Seymour we have made clear that funding is available now to ensure implementation of the scheme without delay should the order be confirmed. This goes beyond the "general indication" of funding intentions, being evidence that the required funding is available and a significant sum already earmarked and committed to the implementation of this scheme.

Elaine Taylor

London & Quadrant Housing Trust

March 2013

