

REQUEST FOR CALL IN

DECISION TAKEN BY: Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Community Investment

DATE: 10/03/2023

ITEM TO BE CALLED IN: Implementation of the Regeneration Strategy for the Kentish Town Regis Road Growth Area

REASON FOR CALL IN: The Holmes Road depot was recently retrofitted at a cost of £8.4m, resulting in a 40% reduction in the carbon footprint of the building. It has been described by the council as an 'exemplar' project and highlighted as a leading example of the council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency¹.

Our Local Plan in section 8 on Sustainability and Climate Change refers to the importance of seeking to retain and improve existing buildings where possible. At 8.19 it expects developers to consider the service life of buildings and their possible future uses to optimise resource efficiency. At 8.83 it highlights the impact that demolition can have on air quality. But this Local Plan was set in 2017. Since then the climate emergency has quite rightly gained greater prominence and as a council we have gained greater awareness of the significance of embedded carbon. It is certain that the new Local Plan that is currently in the pipeline will place a greater emphasis on these points.

The council's Climate Action Plan targets reduction in the embodied carbon of developments and zero carbon developments. The demolition of this flagship project would sit ill at ease with intention, and also with the constitutional role of councillors in protecting the natural environment.

While the decision being called in is not a direct decision to demolish the building, it is a decision that intends to result in the disposal of the building and its development or demolition by the unnamed developer referred to in the report. Demolition would not only be environmentally damaging, but also represent poor stewardship of the council's strained financial resources.

This decision has not been subject to scrutiny by the relevant committee, nor was the related Cabinet decision of 16th November 2022 (Proposed Regeneration Strategy for the Kentish Town Regis Road Growth Area in accordance with the Kentish Town Planning Framework (SC/2022/53)²).

While we support the principle of the Regeneration Strategy for the Kentish Town Regis Road Growth Area, we do not think that members have had a proper opportunity to look at some of the potential implications of way the administration is seeking to implement the strategy. We think it is important that the potential demolition of the Holmes Road depot is challenged.

ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION: Modify the terms of the land sale agreement to include protection from demolition for the Holmes Road depot.

SIGNED: Cllr Tom Simon, Cllr Nancy Jirira, Cllr Linda Chung, Cllr Judy Dixey



¹ <https://www.camden.gov.uk/carbon-reduction-programme>

² <https://democracy.camden.gov.uk/documents/s107278/Regis%20Road%20Growth%20Area%20Cabinet%20Report.pdf>