



SOG Limited

Planning –
Supporting Minutes
CATALOGUE NUMBER 2.07B



GREEN INNOVATION

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HEATH PARK

NORTH SITE: HBC PRE-APP 1

Notes of meeting 02/02/21

PRESENT

John Lewis	SOG Ltd
Tim Gibbs	Halton BC
Tim Metson	Coverwood
Terry Rogan	Architect

1. PLANNING considerations for north site:

- a. TM tabled schemes provided by developers in illustration of offers to purchase.
- b. TR tabled EcoResponsive competition submission layout.
- c. TG comments and issues to address:
 - i. Access: objections expected to any layout which requires access from the north. Noted that access from Heath Road (from the south) present in all schemes.
 - ii. Layouts should acknowledge adjacent Runcorn Hill by adopting “soft” approach to groupings to north boundaries.
 - iii. Include connection of open amenity between playing fields to the east and paddocks to the west.
 - iv. Movement and ecological connection with main site will be favoured. Noted EcoResponsive scheme proposes traffic calming and “shared space” device to achieve this.
 - v. Affordable housing: case can be made to at least reduce policy requirement by reference to the following which will affect viability;
 1. Sterilised land along overhead power lines,
 2. Underground pipelines and footpath constraints,
 3. Looser layout required by proximity to Runcorn Hill,
 4. East-west open amenity connection,
 5. Context of Heath Park Masterplan which may address policy by provision on main site.
 - vi. Delivery concerns may be raised referring to previous permissions not implemented. These can be explained by reference to previous economic climates and consequent business priorities, and ongoing dialogue with Halton BC culminating in the Heath Park Project.

2. STRATEGY

- a. The Heath Park Masterplan will provide the over-arching planning justification to both the main and north sites and this is expected to be ready for more formal consultation mid-June 2021. As both sites are in separate ownerships, distinct planning submissions for each can reference this.

HEATH PARK

HBC PLANNING: PRE-APP 2

Notes of the meeting held 14 April 2021

PRESENT

John Lewis	Heath Park
Tim Gibbs	Halton BC Planning
Terry Rogan	Architect
Simon Lewis	Project Manager

1. PURPOSE

Eco Responsive Environments (ERE) have been commissioned to develop their competition-winning scheme for Heath Park. Their remit is to carry out a Feasibility Study which will identify;

- Commercial viability
- Quantum and location of different uses (residential, commercial, non-commercial, community)
- Risks to the project

This meeting is the continuation of Pre Application Discussions on Heath Park with Halton BC which began in January 2020 followed that year by a number of informal update sessions during the course of the RIBA Competition. The purpose of this meeting is to maintain the dialogue and to ensure alignment with Halton BC planning policies now that the feasibility stage is underway. Subject matter for this meeting was structured around;

- A video clip of Jeremy Rifkin explaining the Green New Deal
- ERE stage 1 Feasibility Stage presentation.

ERE's feasibility study is being carried out in two stages;

- Stage 1: an initial pass at testing layout, circular systems (for water, waste and energy management), and commercial viability,
- Stage 2: absorption of Heath Park team comments on stage 1 and completion of a scheme ready for presentation to investors/developers.

2. ERE BRIEF

ERE have been instructed to develop and prove that their ideas can be realised in today's real world and tomorrow's. It is important that design decisions made now are tested and validated to ensure the project can be implemented. The possibility of an impressive scheme that can't be realised is not acceptable: to quote LCR's design champion Paul Monaghan, "*this is a project that must happen*".

Earlier informal consultations with HBC have revealed agreement that this is an impressive scheme as it resonates with many issues of concern to UK Government (poverty, loneliness, live, work, play, etc...) with a focus on environmental matters. The scheme also reaches outside the boundaries of Heath Park to provide life enhancement for residents in the surrounding areas by introducing new local retail, leisure and community facilities on their doorstep.

The uninterrupted continuation of business at The Heath has been stressed and phasing of developments will be structured to allow this.

The study is being overseen by Rachel Cooper OBE Distinguished Professor of Design Management and Policy at Lancaster University. to ensure design processes are auditable.

3. THE GREEN NEW DEAL

The team view this as a “populist” manifestation of the movement by industry and backers to be seen to be environmentally aware. Heath Park’s aims are echoed in Rifkin’s statements about the coming obsolescence of fossil fuels and the threats presented by climate change. Investors in particular are showing a preference for involvement in projects which positively promote a clean approach to environment and are also socially aware. These principles, applied to the Heath Park Project will not only assist in attracting investment, they will also ensure alignment (and better) with the NPPF and Halton BC’s Core Strategy.

A key element of the Heath Park Project is the retention of existing built assets, adopting a retro-first philosophy wherever possible in the adaptation of buildings and infrastructure to new uses.

4. ERE STAGE 1 PRESENTATION

Key points from the presentation;

- Landscape and ecology connect with surrounding green assets
- Water management strategy beginning to take shape, responding to topography and existing infrastructure
- Transport strategy options presented including;
 - Modes and profiles of traffic (local, residential, business)
 - Bus routes/stops
 - Car parking
 - Transport connections to Expressway for business, Heath Road South for local traffic and connection to Town Centre
 - Over-arching consideration is to design for a transition from today’s needs to 30 years on.
- Energy strategy needs more information on hydrogen possibilities, and may therefore need conventional sources (gas and electricity) but able to adapt to hydrogen source in the future. Other ancillary sources, primarily solar, can be incorporated from day 1.
- Layout, massing and use mix strategy has been influenced by the need to be financially viable. Another major influence is the presence and location of the vertical farm facility.
- The proposed structure to illustrate commercial viability shows initial positive return but significant unknowns at this time (ground conditions, infrastructure modifications) yet to be accounted for.

5. HBC

Initial comments are;

- General alignment with planning policies and note the following
 - ⊖ HBC’s current stance on COMAH is to follow the SPD “Planning for Risk”.

- HBC are looking at allowing cyclists to use dedicated bus lanes. This will be considered by the design team.
- ⊖ Consideration is to be given to the currently proposed high massing against Heath Road South adjacent to existing housing. Good communications with local residents and local councillors is encouraged to avoid unnecessary concerns/objections.

TG confirmed that HBC continue to fully support the concept of Heath Park and the approach being adopted. They welcome the challenges and intended outputs presented at Stage 1 of the feasibility study and recognise the Heath Park Project remains a Liverpool City Region Beacon Project and see the benefits this scheme will bring to the local community and the Borough.

HEATH PARK

HBC PLANNING: PRE-APP 3

Notes of the meeting held 6 July 2021

PRESENT

John Lewis	Heath Park
Tim Gibbs	Halton BC Planning
Terry Rogan	Architect
Tim Metson	Property Consultant

1. PURPOSE

Eco Responsive Environments (ERE) have completed the Feasibility Study of the Heath Park scheme and verified that;

- It can be implemented in accordance with the guiding principles,
- It complies with LA Planning Policies,
- It is commercially viable.

This meeting is number 3 of Pre Application Discussions on Heath Park with Halton BC which began in January 2020 followed that year by a number of informal update sessions during the course of the RIBA Competition and these have subsequently continued.

TG, as HBC's representative, affirmed their partnership with and support of SOG Ltd on this project.

The purpose of this meeting is to maintain the dialogue and to ensure alignment with Halton BC planning policies now that the feasibility stage is complete. Subject matter for this meeting was structured around;

- Status of the Local Plan Examination and a final response to HSE representations,
- ERE's final scheme masterplan,
- Alignment of the scheme with HBC Planning Policies,
- The route to obtaining Outline Planning permission for the scheme as comfort to investors,
- Any possible HBC Section 106 requirements.

The Heath Park Project is now proven viable (including the vertical Farming element) and the team are now embarking on an enabling phase which will provide the remaining supporting elements for an investors' pack ready to take to market.

2. LOCAL PLAN

TG provided an update on the status of the Examination;

- Inspector's report expected Nov-Dec this year,
- Adoption (following consultations needed for any modifications) expected March '22

HSE have not responded to the Inspector's request for a Statement of Common Ground and SOG Ltd are required to provide any further comment by 9 July. TG advised reference to Post-Submission

documents PSD07 and 09 and HSE 's Land Use Planning Methodology, Annex 3. TR to draft a letter to the Programme Officer.

ERE MASTERPLAN AND PLANNING POLICIES

TR and TM tabled the final "frozen" masterplan scheme and briefly described key features. JL explained ongoing work to demonstrate ESG credentials and how these exceed the requirements of HBC Policies.

PLANNING PERMISSION AND INVESTOR COMFORT

Outline permission was mooted as providing more certainty of the viability of the project to investors. TR tabled a draft timeline for the process suggesting a submission in November '21 and a possible decision date of March '22.

TG commented that possible obstacles to obtaining permission before March '22 would be COMAH and Natural England considerations (eg. Commission of a COMAH report, restrictions on the timing of biodiversity surveys). TG suggested a formal Pre-Application Consultation as providing earlier comfort of HBC's support of the scheme and this was agreed.

TG advised reference to HBC Whole Plan Viability Assessment, section 8, which can be used as a checklist of Local Plan policy Requirements for discussion in consultations.

TM queried HBC's possible requirements for Section 106 agreements. TG commented that any agreed level of affordable housing will require assurance on the permanency of its provision.

CONCLUSION

TG restated confirmation that HBC continue to fully support the concept of Heath Park and the approach being adopted. TG will help also facilitate JL's introduction to Mike Wharton, the newly-elected leader of HBC, in order to maintain the dialogue.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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