



Borough of Gosport

Notice is hereby given that an **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF GOSPORT** will be held in the **TOWN HALL, GOSPORT** on **MONDAY the NINTH DAY OF MARCH 2009 AT 6.00PM AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO ATTEND TO CONSIDER AND RESOLVE THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS –**

1. To receive apologies from Members for their inability to attend the Meeting.
2. To consider any Mayor's Communications.
3. To receive Deputations in accordance with Standing Order No 3.5 and to answer Public Questions pursuant to Standing Order No 3.6, such questions to be answered orally during a time not exceeding 15 minutes.

(NOTE: Standing Order No 3.5 requires that notice of a Deputation should be received by the Borough Solicitor **NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON THURSDAY, 5 MARCH 2009** and likewise Standing Order No 3.6 requires that notice of a Public Question should be received by the Borough Solicitor **NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON THURSDAY, 5 MARCH 2009**).

4. Questions (if any) pursuant to Standing Order No 3.4

(NOTE: Members are reminded that Standing Order No 3.4 requires that Notice of Question pursuant to that Standing Order must be received by the Borough Solicitor **NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON FRIDAY, 6 MARCH 2009**).

5. Royal Naval Hospital Haslar - Enquiry by Design

A) A presentation by the Prince's Regeneration Trust

- B) Consideration of the report of the Development Services Manager (attached)

**IAN LYCETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TOWN HALL
GOSPORT**

27 February 2009

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

(To be read from the Chair if members of the public are present)

In the event of the fire alarm (single continuous sound) being activated, please leave the Council Chamber and Public Gallery immediately. Proceed downstairs by way of the main stairs or as directed by GBC staff, follow any of the emergency exit signs. People with disability or mobility issues please identify yourself to GBC staff who will assist in your evacuation of the building.

NOTE: (1) MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO NOTE THAT IF THE COUNCIL WISHES TO CONTINUE ITS BUSINESS BEYOND 9.30PM THEN THE MAYOR MUST MOVE SUCH A PROPOSITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 4.11.18.

Meeting:	EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	9 MARCH 2009
Title:	ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL HASLAR – ENQUIRY BY DESIGN REPORT
Author:	DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To provide members with an officer commentary on the conclusions contained within the Enquiry by Design report relating to RNH Haslar.

Recommendations

- (i) That the Council notes the contents of this report, and advises Defence Estates that further study, research and analysis is required, in accordance with the contents of this report, to enable an appropriate Masterplan for the site to be developed.
- (ii) That Defence Estates are advised to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the site.

1.0 Context

- 1.1 In May 2008, the Defence Estates (DE) commissioned the Prince's Regeneration Trust (the Trust) to assist with the disposal of Haslar Hospital. As a first stage, the Trust held a community based planning workshop over 3 days in early November 2008 founded on Enquiry by Design principles (EbD). Borough Council members and officers attended and contributed to the workshops.
- 1.2 At the beginning of February 2009, the Trust published their report of the Haslar EbD workshops and will present their findings at the beginning of this meeting.
- 1.3 This report provides comment upon and a response to the principal outcomes and conclusions of the EbD report. Three key areas relating to planning policy, conservation and design, and transportation and access are highlighted, although comments on other related matters are included where appropriate. The report attempts to identify positive outcomes from the EbD report, whilst providing an indication of the need for further study and consideration.
- 1.4 A copy of the EbD report has been placed in the Members Room and also distributed to those members who attended the workshops and to group leaders.

2.0 Planning Policy

- 2.1 Policy R/CF2 of the Local Plan Review designates Royal Naval Hospital Haslar as an existing health and community facility for which there is a significant need, and which should be retained unless certain key criteria are met.
- 2.2 The Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, which will eventually replace the Local Plan, is in early stages of preparation. However the Issues and Options consultation paper, published in December 2006, made particular reference

to Haslar Hospital and the retention of health facilities. The Borough Council's position has remained clear on the matter, in that it considers the retention of health facilities on the Haslar site to be of significant importance.

- 2.3 The EbD report appears to contain a number of references that reflect the Borough Council's position e.g.

'Haslar Hospital has, over the centuries, significantly contributed to the local community as a major local employer and provided excellent medical treatment to both military personnel and the public.'

'Commercially viable healthcare options, such as Care and Nursing homes beds (perhaps with ancillary health facilities) or a Care Village, should also be included in the Masterplan. This will build on the Haslar brand as a health and care destination and also fit with the growing demand across the UK to meet the needs of an increasingly aging population.'

... 'every effort should be made to retain some medical presence on the site'.

- 2.4 Furthermore, the report provides the following vision statement for the site:

'A unique opportunity for the site to continue to feature as a prominent local employment generator for generations to come, and through the development of a mixed use scheme (based upon the concepts of health, leisure, heritage, local character and traditional urban and architectural design principles) create a vibrant and sustainable community for people to live, work and visit, whilst preserving the best aspects of this beautiful and historic setting.'

This vision appears to acknowledge the provision of health and community facilities to be key components for the successful development of the site.

- 2.5 The EbD report concludes that every effort should be made to retain some medical presence on site, and this is to be welcomed. However, it is also indicated that such a presence may only occupy a small part of the site, and that new uses would need to be found to preserve the historic buildings. Market studies, presumably undertaken by the DE's consultants to research what these new uses might be, appear to conclude that the site could accommodate in the region of 2,300sq m of commercial floorspace, 2,300 sq m of retail floorspace and some 14,000 sq m of residential floorspace. How these figures were derived is not clear and was not agreed by participants at the workshop.

- 2.6 The 'Next Steps' section of the EbD report is particularly disappointing as it appears to ignore the vision statement and the principles for developing a Masterplan, previously advocated. A range of mixed uses is proposed but does not appear to include health or community facilities. Of particular concern is the following statement:

'The key to developing a successful offer at Haslar Hospital is to allow the market to determine the mix of development, whilst ensuring the right development comes forward.'

This appears to be a particularly naïve conclusion and seems to disregard the Borough Council's duty to prepare planning policies for the site within the context of the LDF, against which future proposals and planning applications would be

assessed. Leaving the site to market forces will undoubtedly lead to a residential based development which will not be consistent with the well established interests of the community reflected in the Local Plan Review and the emerging LDF. In support of their market forces conclusion, the Trust appears to be urging DE to challenge the Borough Council's position by submitting appropriate representations through the LDF process to secure a *'mixed use/and any enabling development which is considered necessary'*, presumably to assist disposal of the site.

3.0 Conservation and Design

3.1 The EBD presented an opportunity to gather considerable expertise in different aspects of planning, heritage and design in one place to share thoughts on the special qualities and character of the Haslar site. Areas of agreement and common ground included the following:

- An understanding of the relationship between the buildings and the landscape in which they are set.
- Recognition of the importance of the geometric layout of buildings on the site.
- The significance of the historic park and the importance of the layout of the grounds, and their potential relationships with development options.
- The potential to restore key aspects of the historic park to enhance the area.
- Opportunities to demolish a series of buildings that, by their removal, would enhance the core historic buildings and their settings.
- Recognition that there is a need to develop a Conservation Management Plan prior to the decommissioning of the hospital, to ensure the site and its buildings are properly maintained ahead of the implementation of any future development proposals.
- Recognition that there are constraints on the extent of parking that the site can provide, and that there will be a need to integrate any future on site car parking sensitively within the landscape.
- The opportunities to create pedestrian routes to enhance public access and to help restore the historic landscape.
- The importance of St Luke's Chapel and Errol Hall as community facilities.
- The aspiration to reopen and reuse the access though the main historic entrance.
- Opportunities to create appropriate new openings near the current main entrance to open up the site to public access.
- The need to remove the security fence around the perimeter.
- The need for detailed design principles to be established for new build elements, including landscape.

3.2 However, there remain several significant issues relating to conservation and design where further study and research is required to inform the development potential of the site. Conservation Planning Guidance (PPG 15) makes it very clear that decisions on the possible loss of potentially valuable historic buildings, for example, must undergo a carefully considered process before their loss can be agreed. Fundamentally this requires any decision on a building to be fully informed by a full understanding of its significance and its context. Although some important information is known about the Haslar site, the research is limited and it is apparent therefore that the conclusions of the EbD workshops could not be fully informed. The Borough Council's Haslar Peninsular Conservation Area Appraisal sets out some key issues and stresses the importance and need for further research. It is unfortunate therefore that the EbD report includes a buildings '*Schedule of Significance*' which was not discussed in any detail and which was not informed by sufficient background research.

3.3 In general terms, the following additional research is required:

- The need to understand how the archaeological complexity of the site will have implications for the identification of development proposals. Currently there is a lack of detailed background research that can identify all the potential sites of earlier structures, and the many trial trenches that are likely to be required to fully understand the extent and implications of the burials.
- Further historic research of the known archives (notably the series of plans at the National Monument Record of the Hospital) needs to be undertaken and analysed. This would enable conclusions so far drawn to be robustly tested and fully informed in the context of heritage value and planning requirements.
- Additional research into the significance of key areas of the site, notably the Zymotic hospital, would enable a better understanding of the viability of proposals, particularly on matters relating to whether certain buildings should remain or could be demolished.

3.4 Attention is drawn to anomalies and some disputed statements within the EbD report, together with some additional areas of concern. These are:

- Thirteen Listed Buildings are referred to, but the report does not make it sufficiently clear that all pre-1948 buildings would be 'listed by association' in accordance with planning law.
- The outputs reported from the Heritage Group do not represent the fully considered views of that group. Final agreement on the potential for demolition, for example, was not agreed as stated.
- The Heritage Group did not, as stated, critically review the heritage significance and robustness of each building, and did not agree the scores set out in the '*Buildings and Landscape Terrier*'. That would require more detailed building by building analysis.
- A *Phasing Plan* within the report suggests that all of the seafront buildings ought to be included within Phase 1. This could result in 'cherry picking' of the

site to the detriment of the core area. A Phasing Plan should ensure a balanced development of the site with appropriate cross subsidy mechanisms in place to secure the reuse of historically significant (but potentially less desirable) buildings.

- The *Preferred Uses Plan* places too much emphasis on residential uses and does not provide a way forward which presumes the retention of the Cross-Link.
- Car parking proposals appear unrealistic and appear not to have regard to the sensitive settings of buildings or the parkland. References to parking do not explain for what purpose specific parking areas would be used.
- Inadequate consideration has been given to providing public access to the waterfront.
- It is evident that no detailed tree survey or nature conservation studies have been undertaken and, as such, proposals for new build elements cannot be considered sufficiently robust to provide any confidence in their appropriateness at this stage.
- The condition of coastal defences was not raised in any detail during the EbD, and will inevitably have a considerable influence on future development costs.

3.5 Two 'Masterplan' options are described within the report. Both options suggest the main building is used for a mix of health, commercial, retail, educational and recreation uses with residential uses on the upper floors. The first option indicates that the Crosslink could be retained to enable a significant health care facility to remain on site, but advocates its demolition if no viable use or user materialises. It may be prohibitively expensive to demolish the Crosslink and re-landscape that element of the site. More analysis of the site assuming the retention of the Crosslink would be a sensible approach.

3.6 In general terms the principles established within the first option could be acceptable but would be very much dependant upon the outcome of further research, particularly with regard to the Zymotic wards. The second option is considered to be undeliverable in planning terms due to the conservation status of the historic park and the harm this would cause to its setting. In view of the lack of information, there can be little confidence or support for the Masterplans to reflect the development potential and constraints of the site.

4.0 Transport and Access

4.1 The EbD report correctly identifies some access constraints for the site, including the relative inaccessibility of the site to non car traffic, restricted accessibility from the north-east via Haslar Bridge, A32 congestion and the limited number of local facilities and amenities within walking and cycling distance. Unfortunately, little is said about the location of the site at the end of a peninsula, its consequential remoteness from the strategic highway network, or the limited capacity of the narrow, local road network to the west of the site. Curiously, despite information to the contrary that was available at the EbD, the report appears to conclude that the primary access to the site is from Haslar Bridge. This is not the case, as survey information clearly

indicated that traffic flows into and from the site have equal, or higher turning movements from the west (via Fort Road and Clayhall Road).

- 4.2 Hampshire County Council, as local highway authority, is of the view that the access constraints affecting the site are such that any development proposals should not result in increased traffic movements. This is expressed as a 'nil detriment' scenario, and one which the EbD report attempts to address within Appendix 3. It would appear that an assessment has been made of likely trip generations associated with potential uses of the site that have then been compared with the estimated number of trips undertaken when the site was at the peak of its use, regarded to be 2001. The outcome would appear to show that there would be no increase in traffic movements, although no rationale is provided to justify the assumed uses and demonstrate that they are appropriate or acceptable. In addition, for the reasons stated previously in this report, the quantum of development appropriate for the site will depend to a significant extent on the outcomes of the additional studies that are required.
- 4.3 More research is required to understand the relationship between the distribution of traffic, not just overall flow and movement, particularly given the commuting patterns of the wider Gosport area and the lack of local employment opportunities. Appropriate baseline figures relating to the former use of the site and related traffic movement should be agreed with the local highway authority to provide a sound basis for projecting likely outcomes for any given development options. There will also be significant merit in understanding trip making patterns and using neighbouring sites for comparison purposes. Similarly, a better understanding of the capacity of all access roads to the site is required in order to determine a suitable scale of development. It will be important to also consider an accurate distribution of traffic and account for the nature and suitability of the roads to accommodate the number and type of vehicles expected. Ultimately this may constrain the type and quantum of development.
- 4.4 The EbD report assumes a requirement for some 350 car parking spaces on site. In addition to previously stated concerns relating to the likely effect on the setting of buildings and spaces, it is considered premature and inappropriate at this stage to consider what levels and locations for car parks would be required. Future uses and their locations are unknown and, as such, it is not possible to make any reliable assessment relating to their varying demands.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The three day EbD workshop brought together many specialists and representatives of the community with an interest in the future development of Haslar Hospital. A considerable amount of work was undertaken and a better understanding of the site has undoubtedly been achieved. However, for the reasons stated in this report, there remains a considerable need for further research and study that is required to be undertaken to inform development potential, proposals and options. The site is extremely complex and, from experience gained through the development of similar sites at Royal Clarence Yard, St George Barracks and Priddys Hard, it is very probable that potential purchasers and developers will require further information to enable them to submit realistic, viable offers.
- 5.2 In the interim period, it is essential that consideration is given to the implementation of appropriate maintenance and management mechanisms to ensure the integrity of the buildings and protected parkland is preserved following the decommissioning of the

site during 2009. To this end, Defence Estates should be urged to prepare and implement a Conservation Management Plan at the earliest possible date.

Financial Services comments:	None
Legal Services comments:	None
Service Improvement Plan implications:	None
Corporate Plan:	The successful development of the Haslar site will contribute towards delivering the Borough Council's strategic priorities.
Risk Assessment:	Failure by the Borough Council to provide comments on the EbD report will prejudice the ability of Defence Estates to prepare an appropriate disposal strategy for important site.
Background papers:	EbD Workshop Report (PRT) - January 2009 Haslar Peninsula Conservation Area Appraisal (GBC) - March 2007
Appendices/Enclosures:	None
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