

Hebden Bridge Community Association

HEBDEN BRIDGE TOWN HALL

PLANNING STATEMENT

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THE PROJECT

1. Hebden Bridge Town Hall is a Grade 2 listed building in the centre of Hebden Bridge built in the 1890s and opened in 1898.
2. The project involves refurbishment of the main town hall building and major extensions to create a new, exciting building with accommodation including:- flexible enterprise units to support the local economy and other office space, conference hall, function, seminar and meeting rooms and catering facilities. It is also proposed to create a new riverside open space.
3. The town hall buildings were transferred early in 2010 to Hebden Bridge Community Association who will manage and operate this new business and community facility in the town to secure its future at the centre of the economic, community and civic life of the town.
4. This is therefore a new and innovative project representing a community-led initiative to deliver a multi-purpose building in the centre of Hebden Bridge for the community of the town and surrounding area.

The Association has a vision for the future of the revitalised town hall as a development of integrated business and community facilities providing a hub for local community services and information, a centre for democracy and decision, a creative quarter supporting local enterprise, offices, hot desks, business developments and support.

It wants it to be a welcoming building, open with public space at its heart accessible and vibrant, celebrating the historic and looking to the future

THE PLANNING APPLICATION

The application plans and forms for the planning and listed building applications are accompanied by the following documentation:

Planning Statement with Planning Policy Annex
Design and Access Statement
Conservation Statement
Demolition of Existing Structure Statement
Transport Statement and Transport Plan (framework)
Access Statement
Renewable Energy Statement
Noise Assessment
Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment
Baseline Ecology Report
Statement of Community Involvement

THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site is located in the heart of Hebden Bridge town centre immediately adjacent to Hebden Water on the south eastern side with shops and cafés beyond; the Market Square to the north east, the 'Hole in't Wall' pub adjoining to the southwest and a number of residential properties and the medical centre across Hangingroyd Lane to the north west.

It is the site of the Town Hall buildings--the main building facing St George's St. completed in 1897 and the former transmission station building on the south eastern side finished a few years later. The surrounding land is currently used as car parking.

The main Town Hall commands a key position in the centre of the town with the main entrance from St George's St and facing towards the market area but the site as a whole can be viewed from all round including views into the waterside from bridges over the river at either end of the site.

The project proposes the opening up of this aspect of the site with a major new public space onto the riverside.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The following sections address the planning policy that is relevant to the proposed development. They cover national, regional and local planning policy and guidance which need to be taken into consideration in determining applications together with other material considerations. Full text of the policies are contained within the attached Annex.

The Government has this week (6th July) revoked with immediate effect the Regional Strategy for the area ---the Yorkshire and Humber Plan ---and has confirmed that the development plan therefore now comprises solely saved policies in the UDP and adopted DPD documents . It is however also confirmed that national Planning Policy Statements are still in effect.

National Policy

The National policy context is provided by a series of Planning Policy Statements, notably but not exclusively PPS1,4,5 and 25 and PPG13. The following sections address the issues of relevance to the proposed development and the relevant PPS policy statements

The proposal would accord with national policy guidance outlined in **PPS1** in that it would create a development which would contribute towards creating a strong, viable, socially inclusive and sustainable community .It would be designed to the highest possible standards, be sustainable and

environmentally friendly and be appropriate to its context and well integrated with the neighbouring buildings and the local area.
It would be a development promoting sustainable economic development (**PPS4**) and promoting the vitality and viability of Hebden Bridge centre.

The proposal would be accessible and well connected with public transport and local services in line with **PPG13**.
It would also make effective use of land by recycling land that has been previously developed.

Local Policy

The main policy document with the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy is now

The Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan 2006 as amended in 2009 (RCUDP).

The emerging **Local Development Framework** is at a relatively early stage and thus provides little guidance and in fact no detailed policy to be addressed.

The 'Core Strategy Issues and Options' paper was produced in November 2008. That document sought input to the direction to be taken for future development in the District. It does state at **para 2.25** that '**Calderdale's town centres have been identified as the key drivers of economic growth within the district and will be the prime location for new residential , employment and leisure developments**'

The location and nature of the proposed development is thus in line with thinking for the future as would indeed seem appropriate in view of its very sustainable location and mixed use content.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMY

The proposed scheme will provide a new/expanded civic and community facility and a significant economic development supporting the local economy.

It represents a sustainable community-led development which will provide a socially inclusive activity hub in the centre of Hebden Bridge adding vitality and viability to the town centre.

The location of the new building makes the facilities and enterprise units accessible by all means of transport but notably by public transport.

The re-use of the town hall and the new extensions will ensure the continued use of the town hall building and site for future decades thus securing the future of this important building which itself has been at the hub of Hebden Bridge life for over a century and securing that future with essentially the same use-- the recognised best method and first preferred use for listed buildings --ie a use as close as possible to the use they were built/designed for.

The scheme is entirely in line with both national and local policies which seek as their major objectives to support sustainable development, sustainable communities and sustainable economic growth.

Policy Support

In line with **PPS1** requirements this will be a highly sustainable development located appropriately in a centre accessible by the full range of transport.

The PPS requires that 'development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community' (**para5**)

and that 'developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development, in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion and more sustainable patterns of development.'(**para 27**)

The **RCUDP** in **Policy GP1** aims to 'promote sustainable development by making Calderdale a place where people want to live,work and visit through:-

- i) The improvement of employment opportunities, mixed use development, traffic reduction measures and better public transport links;
- ii) The effective protection and enhancement of the environment;
- iii) The conservation and efficient use of resources; and
- iv) The promotion of development which recognises the needs of everyone including safety and security issues.

And in **Policy GP2** to promote development in sustainable locations , reduce travel demand and to protect the countryside, all new development should be sited within a sequence of locational preferences including within the market towns of Todmorden and Hebden Bridge-----‘on sites accessible by good quality public transport, well-related to the road network, accessible to job opportunities and close to services/facilities, preference to be given to previously developed land before greenfield sites’
(**GP2vi**)

Policy GCF3 seeks the provision and improvement of a wide range of social, community , education,sports, arts,health and other facilities to meet the needs of all residents such facilities being supported in :-

- i) locations well related to the community and users’ they are intended to serve;
- ii) accessible by good quality public transport , walking and cycling ;and
- iii) create no unacceptable environmental , amenity ,traffic , safety or other problems

Hebden Bridge acts as a service centre for its rural hinterland in this western part of the city and in **para 6.14 of the RCUDP** the Council indicates that it ‘supports proposals that achieve the consolidation, strengthening and enhancements of centres’

The mixed use scheme proposed will provide jobs, business opportunities, social and community facilities in an accessible town centre location thus complying with these objectives and policy requirements. It is a scheme providing enterprise space for small users thus supporting the economic objectives for the area. It provides office space for the local authority community support services and conference and meeting room space for community use.

Yorkshire Forward established two Renaissance Initiatives in Calderdale. The strategy for the Upper Calder Valley is to achieve regeneration through mixed-use development to include ‘**employment, workshops and community uses**’

The objective is ‘to take an holistic approach to a valley wide restoration of civic pride and economic dynamism in the market towns.’

The Council places emphasis on supporting schemes for the improvement of sites, buildings and the public realm and to retain and encourage mixed-use developments, which are beneficial for the community.

Policy E19 of the RCUDP incorporates the land use element of the Renaissance Strategy supporting mixed use developments.

The main objective of **PPS 4** is to promote **sustainable economic growth** and outlines how planning can help achieve this in part by promoting the

vitality and viability of town centres and other centres as important places for communities and to do this wants

- new economic growth and development of main town centre uses to be focused in existing centres, with the aim of offering a wide range of services to communities in an attractive and safe environment and remedying deficiencies in provision in areas with poor access to facilities
- competition between retailers and enhanced consumer choice through the provision of innovative and efficient shopping, leisure, tourism and local services in town centres, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community (particularly socially excluded groups)
- the historic, archaeological and architectural heritage of centres to be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced to provide a sense of place and a focus for the community and for civic activity (**para 10**)

Policy EC10 of the PPS states that planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably, assessed against impact considerations of

- over lifetime development to limit CO2 emissions and provide resilience to climate change;
- accessibility by choice of means of transport;
- secures high quality and inclusive design which takes opportunity for improving character and quality of the area;
- impact on economic and physical regeneration of the area and social inclusion;
- impact on local employment

Policy EC12 indicates support for development which enhances the vitality and viability of market towns and other rural service centres.

The scheme 'ticks all of these boxes' as the development will be built with resilience to climate change –flooding, renewable and energy efficiency and a car free scheme ; accessible by public transport, walking and cycling; high quality and inclusive design improving character and quality of the area ; element of economic and physical regeneration and provides local employment

The application scheme will deliver a mixed use development with 'employment , workshops and community uses' with significant improvement of the existing building and site and achieving great improvement to the public realm with a new high quality public space

A key strategic aim of economic policy in Calderdale is to utilise and promote the positive aspects of the area such as quality of the natural and built environment , social fabric , wider quality of life and transport linkages .

The application scheme is one that addresses in very great measure the policy agenda of PPS1, PPS4 and RCUDP policies on sustainable development in the context delivering sustainable communities and economies

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

The location of the site at this key point in the conservation area and town centre and the nature of the town hall listed building determine that the design and layout of the scheme have to be paramount in consideration of the proposals.

The attached Design and Access Statement and Conservation Statement discuss these aspects in full detail.

PPS 5 Planning for the Historic Environment states in **para 7** the Government overarching aim that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations

It also says that sustainable development should be delivered by ensuring 'that policies and decisions concerning the historic environment:

- recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource
- take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation; and
- recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term.'

And that 'wherever possible, heritage assets should be put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation'.

This is precisely what the development proposals will do.

Policy HE7 states that

'in considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, local planning authorities should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that it holds for this and future generations. This understanding should be used by the local planning authority to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposals.'

Para 7.4 that they should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and of utilising their positive role in place-shaping; and
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets and the historic environment generally can make to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic vitality by virtue of the factors set out in HE3.1

Para 7.5 Local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use.

The proposed development represents a project that addresses all of these factors and as such is a scheme that makes full potential of the contribution of

the historic environment to delivering sustainable economies and communities

Layout and Design of the Scheme

Currently the site is dominated from St George's St by the imposing 1897 Town Hall building and from the two bridges to the north east and south west again by that building and the eastern elevation of the former transmission building. Along Hangingroyd Lane and at the corner with St George's St the townscape is poor ; dominated as it is by open car parking. These parts of the site do not positively enhance the conservation area at this point.

The new building will make an architectural 'statement' at the corner and provide a vibrant and active frontage to Hangingroyd Lane with a new public entrance to the site with link to the waterside space created along this frontage.

The design of the extensions reflect the characteristics and features of the conservation area in particular with the predominate use of natural stone and slate roofs and with complimentary materials such as zinc and timber.

A key feature of the development is the creation of the central open space onto which all the public activity areas of the building will look out and potentially open out in good weather. Importantly also the space will provide views into the development from the two bridges and across the river thus providing an added element to the town centre and a very distinctive identity and emphasis to the new building complex as an outward looking scheme.

The design of the scheme both new building and refurbishment addresses the requirements of **PPS1** with its emphasis on high quality inclusive design;-

'High quality and inclusive design should create well-mixed and integrated developments which avoid segregation and have well-planned public spaces that bring people together and provide opportunities for physical activity and recreation. It means ensuring a place will function well and add to the overall character and quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.' (**para35**)

'Planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.'

Designs are expected to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area. **Para 13** iv

High quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process. High quality and inclusive design should create well-mixed and integrated developments which avoid segregation and have well-planned public spaces that bring people together and provide opportunities for physical activity and recreation. It means ensuring a place will function well

and add to the overall character and quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. This requires carefully planned, high quality buildings and spaces that support the efficient use of resources.
(Para 35)

The Design Review Panel said that it felt the scheme 'has the potential to sing'

It is also in accordance with requirements of the RCUDP especially Policies:-

GBE1 with its requirement that all new development should achieve high standards of design and make a positive contribution to the quality of the local environment and should 'protect and enhance the District's architectural and historic heritage , landscape and amenity , and contribute to its special character

POLICY BE1 where proposals should make a positive contribution to the quality of the existing environment and where feasible

- i. respect or enhance the established character and appearance of existing buildings and the surroundings in terms of layout, scale, height, density, form, massing, siting, design, materials, boundary treatment and landscaping;*
- ii. retain, enhance or create any natural and built features, landmarks or views that contribute to the amenity of the area;*
- iii. be visually attractive and create or retain a sense of local identity;*
- iv. not intrude on key views or vistas;*

POLICY BE18 relating to development within conservation areas which states that new development and alterations and extension of buildings will only be permitted if all the criteria are satisfied.

- i) the form, design, scale, methods of construction and materials respect the characteristics of the buildings in the area, the townscape and landscape setting;*
- ii) the siting of proposals respects existing open spaces, nature conservation, trees and townscape/roofscape features;*
- iii) it does not result in the loss of any open space which makes an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area or features of historic value such as boundary walls and street furniture; and*
- iv) important views within, into and out of the area are preserved or enhanced.*

The Design and Access Statement discusses the detail of the scheme, how it has evolved and how the form, function, design, scale and detail relate to its context and how it addresses the above requirements.

Loss of Former Transmission Station Building

The creation of the central, waterside space is seen as a key feature of the development design. It does however mean the loss of the former transmission station building. The attached Conservation Statement and Design and Access Statements address this issue and outline the history of this building. There is concern about this notably from English Heritage and of course both national (PPS5) and local policies (BE17) indicate a presumption in favour of retention of listed buildings.

The Applicant has undertaken a detailed analysis of an alternative scheme incorporating retention of the building.

Details of the assessment is attached but in essence the retention of the building is firstly difficult in technical terms as it has floor levels below predicted flood levels (See FRA documents);it would prejudice the size and quality of the accommodation that could be provided thus threatening the viability of the scheme as a whole; but also very importantly is the fact that its retention would prevent the exposure of the detailed and impressive rear elevation of the Town Hall building and would prevent the creation of the new open space onto the waterside.

This latter is seen as fundamental to the vision for this development –a people place looking out into the wider town centre and providing welcoming views into the buildings. This will be a very significant amenity both for employees in the buildings and visitors to the building.

It is suggested that the scheme does go a long way to address the exceptional circumstances criteria of **Policy BE17** where demolition could be supported if

- i) it is not possible to continue to use the building for its existing or a previous use;*
- ii) no other reasonable beneficial use can be found for the building;*
- iii) demolition will not cause harm to the setting of any other listed building or the character or appearance of a Conservation Area; and*
- iv) demolition and subsequent redevelopment will result in a community benefit.*

or if other exceptional circumstances are provided to justify demolition.

It has been shown that other uses would be difficult to find;
it can be argued that the exposure of the rear of the town hall building and creation of the new space enhance the conservation area;
it is certainly argued that the scheme as proposed will result in significant community benefit.

On balance the Design review Panel supports demolition of the Old Library as creating a permeable heart with a river aspect that has the potential to optimise and enliven the central space.”

The public consultation exercises undertaken by HBCA (the Applicant) have on two occasions asked people's opinions about the proposed demolition part of the scheme. Back in February two options for development were put forward one retaining the transmission station (former library) building (Option A) and the second very much in line with the application scheme including the demolition (Option B)
34 respondents expressed their preference for Option B with only 5 preferring Option A . When asked specifically about the demolition

7 people thought it was a bad idea for the following reasons

- 2 Concerns over users during demolition
- 3 Shame to demolish good building
- 2 Worries about cost implications of demolition

Whereas 27 thought it a good idea for the following reasons

- 20 Support because of opening up the river
- 5 Support because it allows for more exciting design
- 2 Support because they consider the existing bad.

Then in May, 17 supported the demolition to achieve the riverside space and vista with only 2 not in support (with 6 making other comments).

Even back at the time of the very early consultation exercises when school children were also actively involved the opportunity for making links with the river were identified.

There is therefore significant support for the scheme as it has evolved involving demolition where it is seen that the resultant scheme has significant benefits.

Policy EP15 supports development that opens up the riverside

Development proposals alongside canals and rivers should maintain or, where practical, make a positive contribution to their recreational, tourist or environmental value by:-

- i) retaining and/or improving public access, including access by disabled people, to and alongside the waterside, with, where feasible, new rights of way, with cantilevers where appropriate;*
- ii) opening up the waterside where possible, and subject to conservation and other UDP considerations, by the orientation of frontages towards the waterside;*
- iii) retaining and/or improving the potential for navigational use;*
- iv) conserving the ecological and heritage value of the waterway and its surroundings;*

Here the UDP positively supports the form of development proposed opening up the waterside and presenting frontages to it.

Refurbishment and Re-use of Town Hall Building

The scheme involves complete refurbishment of the main Town Hall building. The details of this aspect of the scheme have been developed after careful consideration of the architectural detail of the building both inside and out and in particular looking to enhance and use most appropriately the impressive rooms and features. The proposals are therefore in accordance with **Policy BE14** which states that alteration and extension of a listed building will only be permitted where :-

- i) it does not have an adverse effect on the architectural and historic character or appearance of the building or its setting; and*
- ii) it respects the individual details of the building including the form, design, scale, methods of construction and materials, as well as internal features which contribute to the character of the listed building.*

Policy BE 16 relates to change of use of a listed building. This scheme is not in effect a change of use as essentially the original town hall building will be used for the same purpose of offices, governance and community activities.

Policy BE15 Development will not be permitted, where through its siting, scale, design or nature it would harm the setting of a listed building .

The Design and Access Statement discusses the nature of the design of the new build elements and how the design ethos , materials to be used and overall layout of the site are seen as enhancing the setting of the original town hall building and the character and appearance of the conservation area in this part of the town centre.

The report on access clearly shows how this development will be fully accessible. The scheme therefore provides a significant opportunity to provide access to the waterside for all in a town where such access is not always easy by virtue of the nature of the topography.

Access for All

An Access Statement is included with the planning application . Working with existing buildings and especially listed buildings does provide challenges in terms of accessibility for all but the report shows that the scheme will comply with RCUDP policy **BE8** in terms of access and facilities for all.

AFFECTS ON AMENITY OF SURROUNDING PROPERTIES

The site sits relatively separated from other properties with the market square to the north and the river providing separation from other commercial town centre properties to the east. On the south west side however the Hole in't Wall pub immediately adjoins the site boundary and opposite the St George's St /Hangingroyd Lane corner there are a number of residential properties . Further south along Hangingroyd Lane opposite the new build part where one of the new building entrances will be is the medical centre.

Policy BE1 of the RCUDP indicates that developments should

- v. not significantly affect the privacy, daylighting and amenity of residents and other occupants;

and **Policy BE2** that

development proposals should not significantly affect the privacy, daylighting and private amenity space of adjacent residents or other occupants and should provide adequate privacy, daylighting and private amenity space for existing and prospective residents and other occupants.

Noise Impact

The Applicant recognises that the proposed development could significantly increase activity on the site some of which may be later at night . A noise report has therefore been produced to assess likely impact on surrounding properties and to suggest mitigating measures.

Some of the proposed uses are noise generating as are patrons arriving and leaving the premises: both of which have the potential to cause disturbance to nearby residential dwellings. A limited amount of building services plant is also proposed for the development which can similarly result in noise disturbance to nearby residential dwellings.

Mitigating measures are therefore suggested.

Such measures as relate to the built form are being incorporated into the building design. The layout of the scheme is in fact such that the uses and activity are in large measure orientated towards the centre of the site and to the south east aspect away from the most sensitive nearby uses.

The break-out of entertainment noise can be controlled through the acoustic design of the building envelope. The premises will be predominantly naturally ventilated but for spaces that are likely to give rise to music or entertainment noise at nearby properties it is proposed to provide alternative means of ventilation so that windows can be kept shut. The detailed design of the town hall will incorporate acoustic attenuation measures which will mitigate noise break out from these sources.

Others measures are management measures which will be brought into effect when the building is operational and it is recognised that the LPA may in fact condition certain aspects of this.

It is proposed that all events and functions would finish at 23:00 hours but the operator would like the flexibility to have a later night extension on an infrequent basis.

The part of the development facing towards the properties on the opposite side of Hangingroyd Lane at the northern corner of the site comprises the enterprise units which will be largely daytime/weekday uses thus making less impact on these residents.

It should be noted that the removal of car parking from the site will be a potential plus as the associated to-ing and fro-ing is removed, some of which will have been at unsociable hours. It will also remove the open areas which could be susceptible to anti-social behaviour.

There will of course be sources of noise from building services/plant. The report also addresses this aspect of concern but concludes that this aspect of noise impacts is well understood and criteria have been proposed by reference to BS4142 which should adequately control the noise impact.

Visual Impact

There will be a visual impact of the development on surrounding properties of a building of this size which does come closer to the properties on Hangingroyd Lane. It is however hoped that this is largely positive in view of the quality of the new design. The eaves levels are also lower as they approach the neighbouring houses and active measures have been taken to reduce the number of windows facing them. Windows in the gable end units instead being orientated over the market square

During the consultation exercise in February the question was asked 'What do you think about the height of the development ?'
35 of the 43 who answered the question said OK as long as does not exceed the existing (drawings showed building massing similar to the current scheme) with only 2 saying it was too big. A further question asked what people thought about the amount of development on the site and 30 out of 44 thought it OK with only 5 saying it was excessive.

The creation of a strong new 'corner' in the streetscape in this important part of the town centre and conservation area is very much seen as a positive and enhancement element of the development proposals. This does therefore need to be balanced against the impact on the immediate neighbours.

TRANSPORT

The site location is within the centre of Hebden Bridge town centre and is thus easily accessible by bus and rail as well as by walking and cycling.

Policy GT4 of the RCUDP defines the hierarchy of consideration for modes of transport with these modes at the top of that hierarchy and private cars at the bottom. The site location is such that the development responds well to these priorities and to the policies of **PPG13** which also seek to reduce reliance on the private car.

The planning application is accompanied by a Transport Statement and by a Transport Plan in accordance with **Policy T1**.

These documents discuss in full the predicted trip generations from the new development and the loss of parking from the site together with measures being taken to seek to mitigate some of the impacts and to encourage and promote sustainable modes of travel.

Car parking for disabled users is to be provided on site but no other car parking . Parking is provided for cycles on site.

Currently parts of the site are used for car parking and this provision will of course be lost (23 spaces), The Transport Statement looks at this issue in the wider context of provision within the centre as a whole and identifies that the only times when there is an identified lack of capacity is on market days and peak times at weekends (across the middle of the day).The Statement discusses how the Applicant (Hebden Bridge Community Association) is taking positive measures to agree access to some alternative parking in the area.

Nevertheless as is discussed above the site is in a very sustainable location in transport terms in the town centre with easy access to public transport and is thus in a good location to respond to both local and national policies of parking restraint designed to discourage the use of the private car .

PPG13 does urge Local Authorities not to require developers to provide more car parking than they wish on developments.

Policy T18 of the RCUDP indicates that within designated town centres the Council will 'not generally require developers to provide parking'

The development is seen as becoming an integral part of the town centre and the activities that the centre users partake of and as such many trips to the development will be part of wider use of the shops and other facilities of the town centre.

Very important to the ethos and development of this scheme has been the need to re-establish street frontage development along Hangingroyd Lane and most notably to the corner of Hangingroyd Lane and St George's Street.

The open car parking split between two levels is a weak feature of the townscape of this part of the conservation area and as such the new development with frontage, active building elevations and a new public entrance on Hangingroyd Lane will in fact enhance the conservation area in this important part .

It is therefore considered that this very important positive aspect of the proposal should be weighed in the balance of material considerations very heavily against reverting to making parking provision on the site.

Policy T18 recognises that when dealing with listed buildings and conservation areas the provision of parking may not be appropriate and thus the merits of each proposal will be considered at the time.

The UDP policy does therefore recognise the importance of achieving the correct balance of considerations in a context such as this.

The Regional Design Review Panel supported the loss of parking ‘as more value is added to the site than the parking currently provides ‘

The two consultation exercises this year specifically sought views on the car parking issue. Of the total responses 34 were in support of our position with 10 not in support and 1 not sure.

In May people were asked—How do you feel about the loss of parking (save for two disabled bays) in exchange for riverside public space. 13 were in support with 8 indicating they didn’t support it (4 other options). 4 respondents did suggest that parking needs to be looked at on a wider scale. It should be commented that the only 2 objectors to demolition of the transmission building commented specifically that any more development would reduce the amount of car parking.

The public response has therefore very definitely generally been in support of the approach pursued .

The development is in a very sustainable location in transport terms. The travel plan framework therefore includes measures to encourage travel to and from the development by sustainable modes in accordance with national and local policies.

FLOODING AND DRAINAGE ISSUES

In accordance with **Para 8 of PPS25** a Flood Risk Assessment has been provided to accompany the applications and in accordance with advice in **para 34** discussions have been held with the Environment Agency to inform the approach taken.

EP20 of the RCUDP indicates that development will not be permitted if it would increase the risk of flooding.

The site is located in flood zones 2 and 3, and further modelling is not necessary to prove the flood risk. The lower ground floor level of the Town Hall building and the existing main car park area are at risk of flooding during a 1 in 100 year flood.

PPS25 requires a risk based approach to be taken with the sequential test and/or exception test being applied as necessary for developments in flood risk areas which the development site is.

The Environment Agency has however confirmed that, because the proposed development is of a less vulnerable nature and because the scheme is one of alterations and extensions, it is not necessary to apply the Sequential Test at the application site. Guidance in PPS25 indicates that it is not necessary to apply the Exception Test.

The existing buildings along the Hebden Water edge form part of a recorded defence asset. The scheme will therefore need to retain this feature and it is likely to need to be improved to current standards.

The development provides the opportunity to make these improvements and to provide flood protection for the lower ground floor of the town hall building and of course remove the floor area in the former transmission station building which is currently susceptible to flood.

This latter is a significant floor area which would be difficult and expensive to protect in contrast to the lower part of the town hall building which is more of a basement in character and can therefore be used more reasonably for ancillary uses such as stores and plant rooms as are proposed.

New build elements will have floor areas above the predicted flood level requirements represented by the 100 year plus 20% for climate change.

The current original town hall and associated buildings are predicted subject to flood whereas the new development will encapsulate measures to ensure that the new building and the activities that take place within it will be protected from future occurrences.

The lower ground floor areas of the town hall will still be at risk of flood and are therefore to be designed to flood resilient standards.

Currently the whole site and buildings is 100% impermeable in drainage terms but it is proposed to in accordance with PPS25 advice and that of EP22 of the CRUDP to use those Sustainable Drainage (SUDS) methods found to be achievable on the site.

Surface water from the new buildings will be discharged in part to Hebden Water.

Engineered attenuation facilities may be required in conjunction with other SUDS techniques to manage the discharge of surface water, so as not to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

PPS22 outlines national policy on renewable energy stating that

‘Local planning authorities and developers should consider the opportunity for incorporating renewable energy projects in all new developments. Small scale renewable energy schemes utilising technologies such as solar panels, Biomass heating, small scale wind turbines, photovoltaic cells and combined heat and power schemes can be incorporated both into new developments and some existing buildings. Local planning authorities should specifically encourage such schemes through positively expressed policies in local development documents’.(**para 18**)

Policy EP27 of the RCUDP reflects this requirement by outlining the requirements for on-site renewable energy generation.

‘Major employment, retail and residential developments (either new build, conversion or renovation) will be required to incorporate on-site renewable energy generation to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements up until 2010, 15% up until 2015 and 20% up until 2020.’

It is proposed that the new development will use on site renewable energy. To address the policy and national advice in PPS22 a Report on the use of Renewable Energy accompanies the application.

Within the development wherever possible natural ventilation principles will be employed. The development will maximise the potential for natural daylighting. The scheme is aiming to surpass the Breeam ‘very good’ rating and the scheme will be developed under the 2010 Part L building regulations so an energy efficient building will be inevitable.

It is intended that the scheme will incorporate solar thermal panels to contribute to energy for hot water and photovoltaic panels to contribute to

energy for the electrical distribution system together with a small –scale combined heat and power unit estimated to produce 31,250 kwh of electricity per annum.

The number of external panels that can be used does have to be considered in the context of the aesthetics of the building. It is not acceptable to introduce solar panels onto the original building and thus the new build is the area that can be used. The panels will in fact be on the least visible parts of the roofscape where there are parallel pitched roofs above the conference hall part of the scheme . Para 19 of PPS22 recognises the visual and environmental impact that such additions can make to buildings and does state that these aspects need to be taken into consideration.

ECOLOGY

Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9): Biological and Geological Conservation provides details of the protection afforded to wildlife and geological features and the approach that should be taken through the planning system.

Policy NE16 of the RCUDP states

‘Development will not be permitted if it would harm the habitat requirements of legally protected, rare or threatened wildlife species and the species themselves unless provision is made to protect those species and their habitats’

The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal affecting the species or its habitat.

The Planning Application is accompanied by an Ecological Report.

The principal aim of this study was to undertake an Ecological Baseline Survey and Roost Potential Assessment

Survey work was undertaken and an analysis made of the ecologically important sites of the surrounding area. The report concludes that given the predominantly urban/hardstanding nature of the site it was deemed unsuitable for the majority of protected species.

However, although no direct evidence of bat roosts was found in the work done, characteristics of the buildings mean that they could exist. Further emergence survey work is being carried out.

It is also possible that some birds may nest in the building voids and thus the Applicant is happy to accept a planning condition preventing works to the building (including demolition) during the nesting season (usually March to August) unless a bird survey is undertaken at the time and this confirms the absence of nesting birds.

These measures will ensure compliance with the requirements of PPS9 and policy NE16.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

It is a fundamental tenet of current planning that the community should be involved in the development process and scheme evolution.

Para 40 of PPS1 states

Planning shapes the places where people work and live. The planning system operates in the public interest to ensure the development and use of land results in better places for people to live, the delivery of development where communities need it, as well as the protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment and the countryside.

The outcomes from planning affect everyone, and everyone must therefore have the opportunity to play a role in delivering effective and inclusive planning. Community involvement is vitally important to planning and the achievement of sustainable development.

And in **para 13 vi**

Community involvement is an essential element in delivering sustainable development and creating sustainable and safe communities

It is also appears that the agenda of the new coalition government is very much of supporting community led development.

This scheme is proposed by Hebden Bridge Community Association whose objective is to secure the Town Hall for the future at the centre of community and civic life in the town. The Association has therefore been very active in ensuring that members of the wider community have been involved and made an input into the scheme development from its earliest inception .

A statement of community involvement is submitted with the planning application. This document shows how the public consultation started back in

2007 and going through to the two events earlier this year when the details of the scheme as it was developing could be considered and opinions garnered.

The statement shows how there has been a great deal of support expressed for the form and nature of the development proposed including some of the most difficult aspects of the scheme including the loss of parking and demolition of the former transmission station building (later used as a library).

CONCLUSION

The Application scheme is an exciting development project which will deliver a major activity hub in the centre of Hebden Bridge providing a creative enterprise centre, offices and community facilities.

It is a scheme that will deliver a development in compliance with national and local policies relating to sustainable economic development and sustainable communities.

The site is an ideal town centre location with good access to public transport.

The scheme has been developed with significant community involvement and there is significant public support both for the proposed uses and the form and nature of the development.

The design and layout have sought to work well with the site and its context. The loss of the transmission station building and the loss of car parking are aspects that need to be balanced against the form of development that can be achieved. The new building complex will deliver a significant new building providing enhancement to the conservation area with an important new space onto the waterside.

Policy context encourages the need to take this approach to ensure that we secure the future of our heritage assets and to ensure that the resultant development is a viable proposal to deliver a sustainable economic development.