

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 (b)

REPORT TO: Executive (Transmodal Implementation)
Sub-Board

DATE: 26th April 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Environment

SUBJECT: Update on Landscape Infrastructure, Halton
B.C. Fields Site.

WARDS: Ditton

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update Member's on progress with the detailed design, planning issues and implementation of the structural landscape around the area proposed for development on the 'Halton Fields' site and to report the outcome of additional consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) Members having been presented with the results of the consultation regarding the mound and football pitch agree the way forward.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Planning Application for the Landscape infrastructure for the HBC Fields site was approved in January 2006. The application was referred to the Secretary of State, but was not called in. Planning Permission was subsequently granted.

3.2 Since the issue of the Approval Notice on the 31st January, work has been in progress to provide the additional information required by the Conditions of the Planning Approval, mainly comprising ecological and archaeological surveys, flood risk assessment, site investigations and detailed designs and construction plans for the landscape. It is anticipated that this work will be completed during the summer.

3.3 It is intended to commence work on site at the earliest opportunity following discharge of the Planning Conditions, starting on the land to the east (around Lovel Terrace), which is untenanted. Once decisions have been made about the proposed road layout on this section of land, detailed designs will be drawn up and the scheme tendered, with a view to starting on site in late summer.

- 3.4 Following several comments from local residents regarding the proposal for an additional football pitch (to replace informal kickabout facilities which will be lost to the north of Lovel Terrace), a letter was sent out to the residents of Halebank to seek their views on whether the land should be used as a football pitch, or for mounding to further screen the development. The results of this consultation will be reported to the meeting, along with any suggested amendments arising from the exercise.
- 3.5 The tenants of the HBC Fields site were served notice on 1st February 2006. Some tenancies expire within three months; the backstop date for all the tenancies is 2nd February 2007. The landscape work to this part of the site will commence as soon as possible after the Council has possession.
- 3.6 The design for the landscape around Lovel's Hall will also be progressed, following a meeting with English Heritage, to complement any proposed road link in this area.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council adopted the DSRFP Masterplan in December 2004. The DSRFP is heralded in the Council's Corporate Plan and LSP and HBC Urban Renewal Strategy and Action Plan, and supports the Council's Urban Renewal corporate priority.
- 4.2 The proposals will help towards the achievement of Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan by the creation of new reedbeds and wildlife corridors, and providing habitats for certain key species.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Funding for the Landscape Infrastructure is available through the Council's Capital Programme for Ditton Strategic Railfreight Park.
- 5.2 The project is environmentally sustainable by creating a series of different habitats for wildlife, including wetlands, reedbeds, meadows and woodland.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 Landscape Scheme doesn't go ahead: unacceptable environmental and visual effect on Halebank
- 6.2 Delay in progress of scheme: planting does not have time to mature before the building is constructed – screening is less effective. Hence the proposal to implement the scheme in advance.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The proposed landscape scheme will provide free access to informal recreational opportunities for all the local community.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park – Landscape Masterplan	Picow Farm Depot	Phil Esseen
EXB 162 (9th December 2004) Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park – The Draft Masterplan and Next Steps	Committee Services	Lynn Cairns
ESB9 (20th October 2005) Landscape Infrastructure, Halton Borough Council Fields Site, Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park	Committee Services	Lynn Cairns