

<b>Meeting Notes</b>		
<b>Project: Bonhay Meadows</b>		
<b>Purpose: Opportunities Review – ECL/ ECC Public &amp; Green Spaces Team</b>		
<b>DATE: 21/10/21</b>	<b>TIME: 1000 – 1100</b>	<b>LOCATION: Teams online meeting</b>
<b>Attendees:</b>	[REDACTED] – ECL [REDACTED] – SE3 Design [REDACTED] – ECC – Commercial Operations Manager – Public and Green Space [REDACTED] – ECC – Tree Manager Environment and Green Space	

## Meeting Purpose

- For ECL to give some background to the site/opportunity which they have been asked to take forward and provide a summary of actions to date.
- To discuss considerations for the site around biodiversity, landscaping, environment and how this is managed.
- To establish the principles for a Working Group with ECL & ECC Public & Green Spaces to feed into the design process and continue talking about the site.
- To increase momentum of progress for this work stage/ the project programme.

## Points discussed/ Actions

### 1.0 Background to the site/opportunity

#### 1.1 [REDACTED] ran through some key facts about the site:

- in Flood Zone 3a
- designated as L3 Open Space in the Local Plan
- large SWW attenuation tank with associated infrastructure at the centre of the site with a requirement to maintain access
- EA access to flood relief steps/ river to be maintained
- a small portion of the site is within the conservation area
- in a very sustainable location for development – good proximity to transport next works, local services and facilities etc.

#### 1.2 [REDACTED] explained the site has been identified by ECL Shareholder as an opportunity to contribute to the ECC's Core Strategy for future development requirements to 2026 (although not currently in the Development Plan). The Proposal is to design the development to retain and enhance the use as open space.

- 1.3 ■ commented that a draft Planning Statement has been prepared. This highlights the planning ‘gains’ and policy considerations associated with development of the site.
- 1.4 ■ showed SE3 Work Stage 1 Development Appraisal which sets out a ‘vision’ and potential layout and massing options for development of the site. ■ emphasised that these drawings are simply to show a vision of what the site could be to start a discussion (buildings that create a façade for new public spaces, intimate, wildlife focused, leisure focused, make the waterfront more visible), highlighting that at this point ‘everything is possible and the best idea wins’.
- 1.5 ■ set out some of the ideas behind the vision for the new development as follows:
- to provide surveillance for the space, there is an ownership of the space
  - potential to incorporate ideas such as a community orchard – allotments – to allow the community to take ownership of the spaces and improve biodiversity
  - to create access to the river (and offer more volume for flood relief)
  - to create more opportunity for planting
  - doesn’t have to be high maintenance
  - river access/ terraces could be used for temporary offers (mobile coffee stands, bring your boats down, local community can have events there)

## 2.0 Current Use of the site

- 2.1 ■ noted that ECC have had some ‘encampments’ on the site, but other than that it is mainly dog walkers who use the flat land. There are occasional picnickers on the riverbanks. ■ noted further that Public & Green Space are aware that there is a fair amount of anti-social behaviour on the flood relief steps, so development of this area could help reduce this.
- 2.2 ■ reiterated the aspiration is to develop the site but retain open space areas for both the building occupants and the public.
- 2.3 ■ explained she had a useful initial discussion with the EA Biodiversity Technical Officer (■) and summarised the points raised by ■ in relation to the landscape work that has been done on the site. This work has been carried out by the EA as part of the Flood Improvements Scheme, with input from the FLOW CIC River Orchard Project to incorporate some fruit trees. The landscape improvements aim to address biodiversity (dry hay meadow planting to encourage habitats, rather than the previously cut grass on the meadow area and is part of a key pollinator network through the City) and also to make the site more accessible to the public (by installing a path through the trees at the centre of the meadow.)
- 2.4 Landscape maintenance – ■ has advised that the FLOW River Orchard Project trees are now managed by specific volunteers. The other trees and grassland is currently being managed/maintained under the landscape contract let for the EA flood works (for a period of 5 years – then most likely ECC responsible).

### 3.0 Trees

- 3.1 [REDACTED] asked [REDACTED] for comment in relation to trees on the site. [REDACTED] noted that he is not that familiar with the site but is aware that there are quite a lot of Ash trees along the river edge (which could be vulnerable to Ash die-back disease). [REDACTED] commented that [REDACTED] has advised the trees on the site are a mix of semi-mature tall prunus (cherry, maple, willow). [REDACTED] noted that in addition to these there are 5 or 6 new fruit trees two or three years old (some of which do not seem to have established very well.)
- 3.2 [REDACTED] explained that [REDACTED] advised that planting locations for the new trees were agreed with the residents of Princess of Alexandra Court to enhance their views.
- 3.3 [REDACTED] noted the line of mature oak trees along the road edge wouldn't be touched (the tree survey undertaken on behalf of the EA for the Flood Defence Improvement works shows they have large RPA's) [REDACTED] noted these mature Oak trees mostly likely offer the most significant biodiversity habitats on the site. These trees are a positive feature which also create a barrier from traffic on Bonhay Road.
- 3.4 [REDACTED] said he could look at tree removals as part of the Working Group process, noting that 2:1 replacement would be ECC target. [REDACTED] noted there is potential for the immature trees on the site to be re-located, potentially for urban 'pocket parks' within the City.
- 3.5 Trees obstructing views to the river – [REDACTED] commented that new trees planted within the development site would need to be considered as generally people don't like trees blocking their views. [REDACTED] commented that inclusion of trees is becoming even more important in the changing climate as they can provide shade etc. but agreed with [REDACTED] that choosing the right type of tree during the design process is important.

### 4.0 Public & Green Space comments/ opportunities

- 4.1 [REDACTED] noted he particularly liked the use of the river in the proposals, and the concept of expanding the leisure facilities that are further upstream, all of which builds on [REDACTED] aspiration to establish/ develop the amenity use of the site.
- [REDACTED] commented that currently Bonhay Meadow is at the end of the towpath route along the river and suggested that if development means it becomes a destination with something positive on the site it could be a really good reason for the public to visit. Public & Green Space can see this project is an opportunity to increase public use of the area by thinking of it as a destination, rather than the point where the path effectively just runs out.
- [REDACTED] suggested that potentially the 'barbeque facilities' concept ECC have been rolling out to draw people into parks in the City could work here.
- 4.2 Green Roofs – [REDACTED] asked whether the scheme was considering 'green' roofs on the buildings to enhance biodiversity. [REDACTED] advised this is something we are considering, noting however, the current view is that swales/water gardens within the landscape could provide a better result for new habitats. [REDACTED] explained one downside of putting a green roof on a building is that it needs maintenance (you have to get people up there to take care of them) The main benefit is attenuation, rather than enhanced biodiversity since green roofs are usually planted with sedum since they are exposed to wind and rain up high.)

█ noted that the development would be designed to meet Passivhaus standards and explained that as architects SE3 Design work to create sustainable, healthy, low energy, ecological and resource efficient developments.

- 4.3 Management of the green space that merges into the development – █ highlighted he would have concerns in relation to student population using the area and how this is managed and noted that separation of public and private will need to be dealt with very delicately.
- 4.4 █ suggested that it would be worth speaking with some of the Housing Officers responsible for the area surrounding the new Shillhay development as there are some lessons to be learned from this site.
- 4.5 █ commented that he can see from the SE3 proposals that there is an opportunity on the site in terms of wildlife and biodiversity and definitely a leisure offer.
- 4.6 █ suggested he would talk to members of his staff team who live in the area/ know the area to see if they can provide any useful insight/ information on how the site is used and how they consider it could be improved.
- 4.7 █ noted maintaining the public open space like a community allotment or something else would be a positive contribution to the site, noting █ previous suggestion of some adult outdoor exercise equipment.

## 5.0 Next Steps/ Actions

- 5.1 ECL to set up a working group with the Public & Green Space team that feeds into SE3 Design and the wider design team.
- 5.2 ECL to explore the potential for incorporating the EA owned strip of land between the ECC site and the river. █ commented that to make the best scheme for the public we have to look at combining this strip of land into the site.
- 5.3 ECL to set date for Work Group Meeting
- 5.4 ECL to issue draft scope for Public Use Survey RFQ to Public & Green Space for comment.

Notes by █ – 20/10/2021