EXECUTIVE

26 JUNE 2012

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 This report is required to seek approval of the design principles for the Galashiels Transport Interchange to allow the detailed design to be taken forward.

1.2 The Architect has taken account of the existing built heritage within Galashiels for the design of the new Transport Interchange in Stirling Street, Galashiels. This has been combined with a contemporary element to create a visual link between the Borders Railway and the centre of town.

1.3 The Landscape Architect has created accessibility between the Transport Interchange and the town centre. This has been supplemented by the proposed creation of a civic space to create a draw into the town centre and to open up the Gala Water corridor.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive:

(a) Agrees to the design principles for the Transport Interchange.

(b) Agrees to the design principles of the waterside walk and civic space.

(c) Agrees that the design team can now take forward the detailed design of the Transport Interchange.

(d) Agrees that the detailed design proposals are presented to the appropriate committee for review prior to the submission of the Planning Application.
3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The detailed design of the Transport Interchange commenced in February 2012 following a three month procurement exercise.

3.2 The project has been split into six different lots of professional expertise, as follows;

1. Architect – D5 Architects
2. Civil Engineer – Buro Happold
3. Structural Engineer – Sinclair Knight Merz
4. Landscape Architect – Landuse
5. Mechanical & Electrical Engineer – Mott MacDonald
6. Quantity Surveyor – Faithful & Gould
7. CDM-Coordinator – Hardies

3.3 D5 Architects presented an analysis of the site context to the Galashiels Sub-Committee on 26 March 2012, which was then incorporated into the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for the wider Stirling Street Regeneration.

3.4 The design principles contained within the report align with the Supplementary Planning Guidance that was approved by the Planning and Building Standards Committee on 31 May 2012 and is currently out to public consultation.

3.5 It was programmed to present the design principles to the Galashiels Developments Sub-Committee in June 2012, but due to the current review of the committee structure it has been agreed to bring this report to the Executive.

3.6 It is important to keep momentum on the progress of this project to allow the delivery of the transport interchange in December 2014, the current programmed date for the opening of the Borders Railway.

3.7 This report provides an overarching review of the design principles for the building, infrastructure and landscape design. A follow up report will be brought to committee to agree the detailed design of the project, prior to the submission of the Planning Application in September 2012.

4 BUILDING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

4.1 Site Location

The site for the proposed Transport Interchange is bounded by Ladhope Vale to the north, a realigned Stirling Street to the south and the existing properties to the east and west as illustrated in pink on Figure 1 below.

Included within the overall scope of works is the land between the realigned Stirling Street and the Gala Water (illustrated in green below) which currently contains a Council owned car park and the existing bus station. This area is to comprise a pedestrian link between the Douglas Bridge and the Interchange and a future development site. In the short to medium term, it is intended that the latter site is to serve as a Council car park.

The Council is currently undertaking acquisition under compulsory purchase legislation to amalgamate a number of different parcels of land to allow for the proposed development. This includes the existing bus station, a strip of the B&M store car park and a strip of the Gala Water river bank.
Figure 1 – Site Location

4.2 Site Analysis

Figures 2 to 5 illustrate key elements of the site analysis undertaken to date. These cover an assessment of the surrounding context, key constraints, site orientation, typography and a selection of site photos.

Figure 2 – Wider Town Context
Figure 3 – Site orientation and Opportunities

Figure 4 – Key Pedestrian Routes and Connections
4.3 **Bus Apron Layout**

Buro Happold and D5 Architects undertook an assessment of options for the proposed bus apron layout, including the layout that formed part of the concept that was approved by Council on 25 February 2010. As a result of this work, an alternative vehicular layout has been developed and undergone vehicle sweep path analysis (see Figure 6 below). The orientation of the buses has changed direction into an industry recognised layout, while maintaining the same flexibility of the previous option. The apron can still incorporate the First Bus overnight parking requirement.
4.4 The revised layout comprises 5 no. 12 metre bus bays and 2 no. 15 metre bus / coach bays (with side access) aligned in a saw tooth formation with the heads of stand facing north east. This revised layout enables pedestrian access to be maintained around both sides of the vehicle apron and removes the need for a turning area south of the realigned Stirling Street within the future development site.

4.5 An assessment of overnight layover has identified that 10 no. vehicles can be parked within the vehicle apron whilst still allowing one of the coach bays to remain in operation. This complies with the brief requirements. This alternative layout was presented to First Group at the meeting on the 25 April 2012 and no concerns were raised.

4.6 **Building Design Analysis**

Figure 7 below illustrates the design constraints for the Transport Interchange Building.

- Adjacent properties to the east and west;
- Existing infrastructure provision (railway, platform, crossing and footways);
- Bus apron layout, plus safety zone;
- Maximise the future development zone.

![Figure 7 – Design Constraints](image)

4.7 Figures 8 & 9 identify the opportunities for visual and physical connections both towards and from within the Interchange building:

- **Physical**
  - Pedestrian link between railway platform and transport interchange;
  - Pedestrian link between Douglas Bridge and the transport interchange.
Visual
- Views into the transport interchange from the railway platform;
- Strong visual link from Douglas Bridge past future development towards the transport interchange;
- Alignment of future development to conceal back of buses, when viewed from Douglas Bridge, whilst still allowing visual connection to transport interchange;
- Visual signifier to direct pedestrians from the transport interchange to the town centre.

Figure 8 – Visual and Physical Connections

Figure 9 – Strong Visual Connections from within the Transport Interchange
4.8 The maximum building extents, as illustrated in Figure 10 below, generates a rectangular building, which sits west to east across the site.

**Figure 10 – Rectangular Form**

**Figure 11 – Key Visual Connections**

4.9 A secondary element which responds to the strong diagonal route through the building and view from the Douglas Bridge punctures this linear form, as illustrated in Figure 11 above and 12 below.

4.10 This secondary projecting element (Figure 12) clearly identifies the Transport Interchange entrances and serves as an identifier for the Interchange building when viewed obliquely from Ladhope Vale and responds to the key view from the Douglas Bridge (Figure 13).

4.11 At ground floor level, this secondary element serves as the route through the Interchange, ensuring maximum connectivity between the railway platform and the town centre.
4.12 Building Massing

A review of the accommodation requirements and site extents has identified a need for a three storey building. This in turn has defined a logical order to the building organisation as described below and illustrated in Figure 14 below:

Ground Floor:
- Interchange concourse
- Tourist / travel information
- Public welfare facilities
- Retail opportunities
- Building / SME reception

First Floor:
- Station management
- Bus Operator facilities
- Council’s Passenger Transport Section

Second Floor:
- Small to Medium Enterprise office accommodation
4.13 A void up through the building brings light into the heart of the concourse and lends the building users a sense of drama and interest, affording a vertical connection through the building. Its position, aligned with the diagonal form, further emphasises the key desire line through the building.

4.14 **Building Form**

The two elements which comprise the massing of the building; the rectangular and diagonal forms are each expressed within the overall building form.

4.15 The orthogonal element reflects the surrounding vernacular building language, comprising a contemporised mansard roof with dormer windows; see Figures 15, 16 & 17 below.
4.16 The manipulation of the mansard roof to create asymmetrical high points at opposing ends results in a dynamic form which accentuates perspective and draws the eye along the building; see figure 18 below.

Figure 18 – Manipulation of Mansard Roof Form

4.17 The surrounding typography of the site means that the Interchange building will be viewed from above. The roofscape is therefore as important as the building elevations and the sculptural roof form responds to this ‘fifth’ elevation. Therefore the contemporary mansard roof form is the preferred option (Figure 19 below).
4.18 Puncturing through the mansard roof form on both the Ladhope Vale and Stirling Street elevations, the secondary projecting element responds to the key desire line through the site and clearly expresses the Interchange entrances from both the railway platform and town centre approaches. This projecting form overhangs the pavement and public spaces below (see Figure 20 below).

4.19 Materials and Articulation

It is proposed to reflect the local building materials through the use of a stone plinth with a slate clad roof. The use of metal cladding on the projecting element serves to further accentuate the Interchange entrances and key desire line through a contrast in material.

4.20 In keeping with the surrounding building typology, evenly spaced windows articulate the building facades and roof. A common feature of the surrounding building typology is the dressed stone detail around the windows. This serves to accentuate the window, through both the use of contrasting colour and contrasting material.

4.21 This language is utilised within the Interchange building with each window bordered by a metal frame which contrasts with the stone and slate of the building walls and roof. Again colour could be introduced on these elements.

5 LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.1 Gala Water Amenity Walkway

A new riverside walkway would accommodate a shared pedestrian and cycling route. Current cycle infrastructure design guidance (Cycle by
Design, Transport Scotland, 2010) suggests various options for the design of shared pedestrian and cyclist paths.

5.2 It is generally accepted that a shared pedestrian and cyclist route should be a minimum of 3m width. It is proposed to incorporate a 500mm hard surface ‘buffer’ on either side of the 3m shared surface where it is enclosed by a wall, railing or slope to minimise the chance of collision. This buffer should be increased in locations where street furniture components are proposed. It is also proposed that a 1.2m buffer is incorporated on sections of the path adjacent to the river to accommodate pedestrians standing at this location or street furniture components (Figure 21).

Figure 21 – Proposed Riverside Walkway

5.3 It is proposed to incorporate a minimum 2m wide ‘green’ strip between the walkway and the proposed interim car parking. This would provide a green
edge and buffer between car parking and the river corridor, Path connections would be implemented between the car park and the riverside walkway. The green strip would incorporate tree avenue planting, low ground cover and / or amenity grass verges.

5.4 In addition to the above if there is a requirement to include a flood defence wall, it is proposed that this should be located at the rear of the green strip to maximise the connectivity between the riverside walkway and the river itself.

5.5 A further option whereby the flood defence is incorporated within a slope or raised berm within the green strip between the riverside walkway and the car park area.

5.6 To maximise the walkway without affecting development area will be considered is whereby the walkway could be partially cantilevered to maximise space within the car park area and the future development site.

5.7 As illustrated on Figure 22 there is an option to create a fluid edge to the riverside walkway that may respond to and interact with the existing riverside context, i.e. landform and mature trees. It could widen in certain places between trees, cantilever over the river to provide spaces to sit and contemplate.

Figure 22 – Fluid Edge
5.8 **Link Between Douglas Bridge & Transport Interchange**

The provision of a linear pedestrian link between the Douglas Bridge and the Transport Interchange was identified as a key component of the original Transport Interchange brief. Through various stakeholder and client discussions it is now understood that the creation of a flexible riverside public space, incorporating a key pedestrian thoroughfare between the Douglas Bridge and the Transport Interchange, should be considered. The public space should link with the proposed riverside walkway.

5.9 The creation of a public space between the Douglas Bridge and Stirling Street would benefit from a ‘buffer’ between it and Stirling Street and the proposed Bus Apron. This would reduce exposure to the noise and movement of bus traffic. It would also orientate the public space more towards the Gala Water rather than Stirling Street. Consideration should be given to providing an interim public realm solution within this buffer area that relates to the public space in the short term but would allow building development in the future.

![Medium Term Treatment of Link](image)

**Figure 22 – Medium Term Treatment of Link**

5.10 The key to this space is to create an initial draw from the Transport Interchange towards the town centre and give people a reason to cross Stirling Street. The civic space will provide a focal point and an area for the community to hold events and maximise the footfall into the town centre.
6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial
(a) There are no additional costs associated with any of the recommendations of this report.

(b) The project’s current budget of £7.27m, including £1.865m of European funding (2012/13 onwards) is currently estimated to be sufficient for the delivery the proposals contained in this report.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations
(a) The Key to the building design is to create a gateway to the Scottish Borders, but taking account of the built heritage within the vicinity. This is a difficult exercise with a new build of this scale and usage.

(b) The key to the landscaping is to create attractive access to and from the town centre to deliver the benefits that the Borders railway can bring to the viability/vitality of the town centre.

(c) With the loss of the Black Path the strategic vision is to replace parts of the path adjacent to the Gala Water and open up the amenity of the river. The creation of a walkway with this project will create a precedent for any future developments.

(d) It is essential that the design principles are approved so that the detailed design can be undertaken in line with the programme. This leads ultimately to an opening of the Transport Interchange in December 2014.

(e) The flood risk to the hard landscaped areas and future re-development space is being assessed at present.

6.3 Equalities
An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications. The regeneration of Stirling Street is aligned with maximising the benefits of the Borders railway and the new Transport Interchange to stimulate the town centre of Galashiels and create employment/recreation/housing opportunities for the population of the Scottish Borders.

6.4 Acting Sustainably
(a) The delivery of the Transport Interchange will deliver new business space for small to medium enterprises.

(b) The delivery of the Transport interchange will create a destination for visitors and investors to the Scottish Borders. This in turn will maximise the benefits the Borders railway can bring.

6.5 Carbon Management
The transport interchange will promote the use of sustainable transport and provide a viable alternative to the private car.
6.6 **Rural Proofing**

N/A

6.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

N/A

7 **CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Head of Audit and Risk and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and the comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

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**Approved by**

**Director of Environment and Infrastructure**

**Signature**

**Author(s)**

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**Background Papers:** Nil

**Previous Minute Reference:** Nil

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