

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK 4 : CALL FOR IDEAS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

HEARTLANDS DEVELOPMENT SITE, WHITBURN STRATEGIC TRANSPORT HUB OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Introduction

This representation concerns the Heartlands development site at Whitburn, West Lothian (**see Appendix 1 for site location and site context plans**) and is submitted on behalf of our client Green Town (Heartlands) Limited in response to the invitation to submit a representation to the National Planning Framework 4 Call for Ideas and National Developments.

In all regards this representation seeks the designation of the Heartlands site as a National Development site in NPF4 principally in relation to the establishment of a Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance on the Heartlands development site.

The Heartlands development site is located on lands of the former Polkemmet Colliery, to the south of the M8 motorway, to the west of Whitburn and north of Fauldhouse. The site is strategically located almost centrally between Glasgow and Edinburgh, being only 37km from Glasgow and 34km from Edinburgh. Importantly in terms of the establishment of a strategic transport hub it should be noted upfront that the core infrastructure delivered to date on the Heartlands site includes a privately funded full diamond interchange motorway junction to the M8 motorway.

In all regards the extensive decontamination, remediation, reclamation and subsequent re-use of the former Colliery land at Heartlands which has and continues to take place is strongly supported by all aspects and levels of planning policy including National Planning Policy in the form of the Scottish Government document 'Scottish Planning Policy', where there is strong support for the development of brownfield sites. This redevelopment of the former Polkemmet Colliery site has also been strongly supported by West Lothian Council, where through the approval of various planning consents it has been demonstrated that there is support for this large scale reclamation of the former Colliery site. In addition to this the previous West Lothian Local Plan stated that **"the Council fully supports the development initiative at Polkemmet, known as Heartlands, which represents the largest ever private sector investment in West Lothian"**. This support continues into the current Local Development Plan.

In this regard the remediation works alone have cost **around £120 million** with the previous West Lothian Local Plan stating that the Heartlands proposals involve **"one of the most problematic contaminated and derelict sites in Scotland"** and the Council have stated in previous local plan consultations that the redevelopment of this land is thought to be the best means of securing the rehabilitation of the largest remaining area of dereliction in West Lothian.

At present planning consents in relation to the Heartlands site allow for :

- 2,000 residential units (including affordable housing);
- 140,000m² business park;
- 5,561m² class 1 retail space;
- two PGA designed Championship Golf Courses;
- golf related hotel;
- health and leisure facilities;
- dedicated motorway junction;

- transport interchange (including park-and-ride facility);
- neighbourhood centre; and
- improved educational facilities.

The above can be illustrated by reference to the latest Global Schematic Masterplan for the site (**see Appendix 2**).

It is considered of significance to this representation to note that development on the Heartlands site is progressing well with the M8 motorway junction and business park infrastructure (next to the motorway junction) complete and 457 residential dwellings built and occupied on the site.

As previously stated this submission relates to the designation of the Heartlands site as a National Development site principally in relation to the establishment of a Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance.

In this regard the requirement for a Public Transport Interchange (including park-and-ride facility) forms part of the Planning Permission in Principle for the site, is included in the Section 75 legal agreement for the site and is designated on the Heartlands Development Site in the adopted West Lothian Local Plan (see Appendix 4).

With this in mind and given the key strategic location of the Heartlands site, in order to ensure that the Heartlands Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange provided if fit for purposes, commercial, user friendly, future proofed and in line with the ongoing need to reduce reliance on carbon Green Town (Heartlands) Limited have established a working group to formulate ideas. This working group current involves West Lothian Council, Whitburn Community Council, several of the key bus operators, Green Town (Heartlands) and their consultant team.

It is important to note that feedback from this working group has been extremely positive with several key bus operators keen to be involved and recognising the key strategic location of the Heartlands site.

In all regards it should be noted that Green Town (Heartlands) are committed to delivering an excellent, commercial functioning public transport interchange and a detailed planning application will follow for this in due course.

Notwithstanding this the enclosed plan (see Appendix 3) prepared by Green Town (Heartlands) traffic consultant, Dougall Baillie Associates, illustrates a general idea of the location and content of the Heartlands Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange. It should be noted that this indicative plan (No. 20080-SK-01) has been discussed by the aforementioned working group.

With regard to the designation of a site as a National Development the background information on NPF4 and the guidance notes provided clearly state the following :

“National Development Assessment Criteria

We will analyse all proposals for national development status in relation to the following criteria:

- ***Climate Change*** : *The development will help to reduce emissions, contributing to Scotland’s target of net zero emissions by 2045, will be emissions neutral, or emissions negative.*

- **People** : *The development will support the health, wellbeing, sustainability, and quality of life of our current and future population.*
- **Inclusive Growth** : *The development will contribute to sustainable economic growth that helps to reduce poverty and inequality across Scotland.*
- **Place** : *The development will protect or enhance the quality of a place or improve biodiversity.”*

A number of questions are posed throughout the National Framework 4 – Call for Ideas supporting documentation which overlap with the National Development assessment criteria and as such this section of the representation comments on those questions which are relevant and applicable to the site at Heartlands.

1. What development will we need to address climate change?

It is submitted that National Planning Framework 4 should recognise the potential of Heartlands to assist in the delivery of a proactive response to climate change. The designation of a National Development in the form of a Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance on the Heartlands site would contribute to a substantial and significant reduction in the number of people commuting via private car between Glasgow, Edinburgh and the surrounding areas. The reduction in car use will assist the Government in reaching their target of net zero emissions by 2045. The Heartlands Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange would include a substantial Park-and-Ride facility, would tackle congestion problems and provide an alternative and more sustainable travel option for travellers to Edinburgh, Glasgow and the surrounding area.

In all regards the Heartlands Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange would assist in providing jobs within the area and supporting the local economy. It is submitted that this facility and indeed the wider Heartlands development is capable of :

- Contributing to a reduction in emissions on the M8 corridor
- Facilitating job creation, reducing unemployment
- Improving transport and infrastructure networks
- Adapting to or contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change

Given the aforementioned it is submitted that the Heartlands site should be recognised as a National Development within the emerging National Planning Framework 4 principally in relation to the establishment of a Strategic Transport Hub of National Importance as the site is adaptable, resilient and capable of meeting the previously outlined National Development Assessment Criteria in relation to Climate Change. As outlined above, the development of Heartlands is capable of assisting in the reaching the target of net zero emissions by 2045 and can support inclusive, sustainable economic growth through the delivery of this Strategic and Sustainable Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance.

2. How can planning best support our quality of life, health and wellbeing in the future?

In response to the climate emergency it is a widely stated aim that by 2050 our society should seek to have a significant reduction on the reliance on private cars. In order to do this, the Scottish Government must support and encourage the delivery of infrastructure which seeks to promote a reduction in car usage. The Heartlands Development Site is strategically located almost equidistant

between Edinburgh and Glasgow; the introduction of a Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance in this location will help to encourage the expansion of the Heartlands Development, making the area more attractive to prospective developers. It is submitted that the Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Significance would make existing and future development around the Heartlands area more inclusive; households without car ownership would be attracted to relocate to the area due to the presence of this sustainable transport infrastructure. It would also encourage a reduction in car usage within the existing local population as they would have access to the transport hub / public transport interchange, but also on the M8 motorway corridor.

Furthermore, as outlined previously in this representation current consents on the Heartlands site allow for (amongst a wide range of other uses) a 140,000m² business park. It is submitted that the introduction of this Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange at this location will create an attractive and accessible environment and encourage new businesses to the area, stimulating economic growth.

In all regards, in response to the climate emergency, sustainable strategic infrastructural enhancements are required throughout Scotland to encourage and stimulate a reduction in car usage within the country, which in turn helps to establish a better quality and more sustainable place to the benefit of the existing and future population.

The Heartlands Development Site should be recognised as a National Development within the emerging National Planning Framework 4 principally in relation to the establishment of a Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance as it can help stimulate sustainable infrastructural development and is expected to encourage a significant reduction in car usage. It is submitted that this will help to support improved quality of life, health and wellbeing in the area, and would improve the future of the Heartlands redevelopment for both existing and prospective residents and businesses (in line with the requirements of the National Development Assessment Criteria : People).

3. What does planning need to do to enable development and investment in our economy so that it benefits everyone?

It is submitted that the Heartlands Major Development Site has a key role to play in responding to the economic challenges Scotland is likely to face in the coming years. The site's strategic location (situated equidistant between Edinburgh and Glasgow) means it is in the ideal position to facilitate the development of strategic infrastructure including a Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance which will assist in stimulating sustainable economic growth throughout Central Scotland (encouraging businesses to locate and promoting residential development on site). Given the climate emergency, throughout the duration of National Planning Framework 4 there will be a continued and heightened focus on responding to climate change and creating sustainable places to live and work. As stated in response to Question 2 noted above, the delivery of a development of this nature will encourage the expansion of a settlement which has excellent transport links to the rest of the country – making future development in this location accessible and attractive to future developers, particularly those seeking sustainable locations to base their workforce.

In line with the above, it is submitted that the Heartlands Development with its capacity to deliver a sustainable Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance should be designated as a National Development within the emerging National Planning Framework 4 in order to provide stability and confidence to both investors and developers.

Providing this stability and confidence helps to stimulate and distribute sustainable economic growth promoting development and investment within the economy which helps to reduce poverty and inequality (in line with National Development Assessment Criteria : Inclusive Growth).

4. What policies are needed to improve, protect and strengthen the special character of our places?

The redevelopment of Heartlands involved extensive decontamination, remediation, reclamation and reuse of the former Polkemmet Colliery land at Whitburn, West Lothian which in itself has cost around £120 million, a further reason why the site requires protection as a National Development site. There has been a remarkable change within West Lothian as a consequence of the redevelopment at Heartlands. In order to unlock the full potential of this brownfield site, it is submitted that the site should be designated as a National Development as outlined, with the present planning consents in relation to the Heartlands site allowing for the following :

- 2,000 residential units (including affordable housing);
- 140,000m² business park;
- 5,561m² class 1 retail space;
- two PGA designed Championship Golf Courses;
- golf related hotel;
- health and leisure facilities;
- dedicated motorway junction;
- transport interchange (including park-and-ride facility);
- neighbourhood centre; and
- improved educational facilities.

In all regards a National Development designation will for all the reasons previously stated in this response protect, enhance and ensure the quality of place to be developed at Heartlands (in line with the National Development Assessment Criteria: Place).

5. What infrastructure do we need to build to realise our long term aspirations?

It is submitted that the Heartlands Development Site has a fundamental role in delivering the sustainable and innovative infrastructure that Scotland requires to facilitate future development. In order to encourage the growth in sustainable transport, improvements are required to existing infrastructure. Heartlands is capable of delivering the wide range of uses outlined at the start of this submission and importantly has consent for 2000 residential units and a 140,000m² business park. The Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance is required to support the continued and sustainable development of this site, allowing the delivery of residential and business units in a sustainable location with excellent transport links to both Edinburgh and Glasgow, but also to attract existing and future drivers off the M8, and into long distance buses travelling east and west from Heartlands.

Furthermore, the Strategic Transport Hub itself has the potential to be energy neutral through the installation within its on-site infrastructure of sustainable power generation (for example wind and/or PV infrastructure, that could send sustainable power back to the grid.

In all regards it is submitted that the Heartlands Development Site should be designated as a National Development capable of facilitating and delivering the sustainable infrastructure required for Scotland to deliver on its long term aspirations.

Conclusion

This representation concerns the Heartlands Development Site at Whitburn, West Lothian and is submitted on behalf of our client, Green Town (Heartlands) Ltd. in response to the National Planning Framework 4 – Call for Ideas and National Developments.

In all regards and for the reasons outlined this representation seeks the designation of the Heartlands site as a National Development Site in NPF4 principally in relation to the establishment of a Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange of National Importance.

In addition it is significant to note that being on lands of the former Polkemmet Colliery the Heartlands site has undergone extensive decontamination and remediation (with around £120 million spent on this) and for some considerable period of time has been a site of national significance. It is considered of the utmost importance to note that major projects cannot be delivered in short time periods and as such the National Planning Framework should provide stability and long term confidence to investors.

The emerging National Planning Framework must provide confidence and stability to investors and developers to help encourage nationally significant projects to be brought forward in today's difficult economic climate. In all regards it is submitted that the site at Heartlands should be designated as a National Development Site in the emerging National Planning Framework 4 – as demonstrated the site and proposals have the ability to meet all the criteria stated for National Development status, and the potential to stimulate sustainability benefits on a national scale due to its location the M8 Motorway between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Appendix 1 : Heartlands Red Line Site Location and Site Context Plans

Appendix 2 : Global Schematic Masterplan for Heartlands Site

Appendix 3 : Heartlands Strategic Transport Hub / Public Transport Interchange Indicative Plan (No. 20080-SK-01)

Appendix 4 : Extracts from West Lothian Local Development Plan