

# Partnership facilitates excellence in construction

The Langtree Group has created Mere Grange, a 31-acre new business park development to the south of St Helens which typifies effective partnership working, writes Roy Benyon, Building Control Manager, St Helens Council

**T**he partnerships thread began with the design brief at planning stage and this continued throughout the construction process to the front line of construction, where St Helens Building Control and Warrington Building Control helped to facilitate this excellent development.

Partnership working began with St Helens Council and English Partnerships, who worked together drawing up plans for a £50 million

scheme, offering 300,000 sq ft of stand alone offices. The vision for Mere Grange was to create an attractive high quality business park environment that will encourage growth and investment in the St Helens economy.

The site forms part of the National Coalfield Programme and is a strategic employment site within St Helens. Phase One was completed in September 2008 and comprises 55,000 sq ft in 10 high-quality speculative buildings.

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The units are two-storey and feature a central core, raised access floors, lift installation and provision for comfort cooling. The semi-detached units have the capacity of being combined to form larger units.

In formulating the design concept for Mere Grange, care and attention was given to ensuring that a business park environment was created that exceeds the standards of design and quality expected by modern occupiers. This applies to both the internal and external fabric of the buildings





and also the surrounding environment and public realm space. The quality of hard and soft landscaping within the site creates a quality feel that establishes the park in its setting.

The site provides businesses with the ideal opportunity to be competitive given its proximity to the transport network, availability of workforce, the design and prestige of the premises and the impact that it will have on potential clients and investors.

This first phase of the project was completed on time



◀ and has delivered a high-class quality development. The building control plan checking process was initially dealt with Warrington Building Control who is partnered with Langtree under the LABC Partner Authority Scheme. Subsequently, St Helens' building control team took over the project to work with the design teams and contractors on site with the site inspections. Communication between

partners, the design team and our building control team ensured key decisions were executed at the right time, changes to construction detail were dealt with at speed and the construction programme was kept on track.

At St Helens, we see our role as integral to the design process. In many design and build contracts and PFI schemes, we are requested to act quickly to design changes, following value engineering

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exercises, and at the front line we respond quickly to provide inspections on site the same day to ensure delays are kept to the minimum.

We will continue to facilitate excellence through partnership working and along with companies like Langtree, and to build on the success of quality developments like Mere Grange.