

University of Cambridge

West Cambridge Community Group

Minutes of the Meeting

10 December 2014 in the Seminar Rooms at the Hauser Forum, 3 Charles Babbage Road, West Cambridge site.

Attendees:

Robin Heydon, Cambridge Cycling Campaign
Hester Wells, Cambridge Cycling Campaign
Hugh Purser, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents Association
Eddie Powell, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents Association
David Cairns, Coton Parish
Harvey Bibby, Lansdowne Road resident
Edward Byam-Cook, Madingley Parish
Peter Haylor, Merton Hall Farmhouse (Faith Centre)
Humphy Gleave, North Newnham Residents Association
Sue Davies, Nursery
Simon Cornish, University of Cambridge Sports Centre
Nicky Blanning, West Cambridge Apartments
Christopher Jeans, West Cambridge Preservation Society
Will Hudson, West Cambridge Safety Committee
Professor Sir Mike Gregory, WestNet
John Evans, Cambridge City Council

Paul Milliner, University
Heather Topel, University
Biky Wan, University
Jonathan Rose, Aecom (Consultant)
Sam Ellis, Aecom (Consultant)
Jim Strike, Aecom (Consultant)
Elizabeth Crump, Aecom (Consultant)
Greg Callaghan, Peter Brett Associates (Consultant)

Apologies

Jane Paterson-Todd, Cambridge Ahead
Sian Reid, Newnham Ward
Rod Cantrill, Newnham Ward
Catherine Bailey Cambridge PPF
Morcom Lunt, Federation of Residents' Association
Lucy Nethsingha, Newnham Ward
Jeremy Sanders

1. INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.1 As this was the first meeting of the group, Heather Topel acted as Chair and invited people to consider if they would like to take on that role which is item 5 of the meeting. Heather Topel welcomed the group and introductions were made.
- 1.2 The Membership list was circulated in advance of the meeting. Heather Topel asked attendees that if there were specific groups within the local community who should be invited to the group, then proposed names could be provided to Biky Wan to contact about future attendance.

1.3 The Terms of Reference were circulated in advance of the meeting. There were no comments raised. Biky Wan gave a brief overview of the Community Group established for the North West Cambridge Development which provided the context for the West Cambridge Community Group formation and shared feedback from its members about the process.

2. FEEDBACK FROM THE SURVEY

Prior to the meeting, members had been issued an electronic survey to complete about their views of the existing West Cambridge site. Biky Wan presented a brief overview of the 13 responses received. Heather Topel invited any questions in response to the survey and its feedback.

Q: How does the University think the West Cambridge site has developed? (David Cairns)

A: The West Cambridge masterplan from the 1990s has not been fully conceived and parts are still not developed. Our understanding of new developments today, for instance how sustainability and transport is delivered, is different. There is also a change in the nature of Cambridge and move towards the north west, particularly with the North West Cambridge Development (Heather Topel). The original masterplan was hampered from the start and there was not a holistic approach. The new approach will be different, with a focus on the quality of place as well as quality of buildings.

Q: I was interested in the question about being a "neighbour", could you elaborate? (Peter Haylor)

A: We hope to look at how the development and University can be a good neighbour and feel like part of the city. (Heather Topel)

Comment: The lack of social infrastructure leads to isolation, and 3500 postdocs who do not have a college affiliation is a vast social and pastoral challenge for the University. (Peter Haylor)

A: The North West Cambridge Development will be providing a significant amount of housing for postdocs and the University has established the Office of Post-Doctoral Affairs to develop opportunities for pastoral care.

3. DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

3.1 Jonathan Rose presented an overview of the West Cambridge site and how this benchmarks with local and international research clusters.

3.2 Jonathan Rose presented the Vision for the new West Cambridge masterplan and its development principles, as well as the emerging illustrative masterplan. Greg Callaghan gave a brief overview of the strategic transport elements and opportunities.

3.3 Heather Topel said that the University would be working on a new masterplan and the programme targets an application for the masterplan to be submitted in Summer 2015.

3.4 The group were invited to ask questions and raise comments about the material that had been presented.

Q: Why does the boundary include the square green area beneath the West Cambridge area [the part that drops from being a straight line to the M11 boundary to the west of the site]? (Christopher Jeans)

A: This area is within University ownership and it was decided to include it within the study area but not necessarily for development. (Paul Milliner)

Q: Is the Coton Footpath the edge of the Newnham boundary? (Peter Haylor)

A: [Post-meeting note] No. the Footpath is within the ward. Madingley Road is the northern ward boundary.

Q: Are the University and St John's College in contact regarding the land ownership and development issues to coordinate their approach? The development proposals that you have shared focus on east to west movements, but if you think strategically about access, you also need to think about access to

the south and considering that this site is within Newnham ward and there is no access to get through, it would be a good option to have. (Hugh Purser)

A: The University met with St John's College to discuss their position about the highways and junction capacity and will be developing an approach in response. (Paul Milliner). The Local Plan is currently under review: the West Cambridge site is included within those proposals, but the land south of the West Cambridge site is not presently in the Local Plan and that area is being promoted by others for development. (Heather Topel)

Q: The Cambridge Preservation Society would like to improve the noise impact from the M11 in the area, as would we for residents in Coton which is a quarter of a mile away from the M11 – the Society has the land but not the soil to do this – can something be done to assist? (David Cairns)

A: The University can look into this aspect of detail at the appropriate time to see what can be done to assist.

Comment: The development of cycle routes by the University and Colleges is underway and we would welcome dialogue and a coordinated approach to get people from the village to the centre. (David Cairns)

Q: We need links that thread through to the villages, particularly for cyclists, in Cambridge everyone cycles further than the average – possibly a bridge over the River Cam, just south of Newnham. New routes are provided but the modelling is not produced on those and then that creates the demand and use. The cycle path west of the Sports Centre becomes very narrow for cyclists, would it be possible to brand it West Cambridge along the pathway and towards the villages beyond (Robin Heydon)

A: In looking at the West Cambridge development proposals the University will run the County's and Consultant's transport modelling to understand how people move. The team also has travel plans to understand the present area. The modelling includes all forms of transport. Transport can be a topic for a future meeting. (Heather Topel and Greg Callaghan).

Q: Cycle routes can be problematic when paths are the same level and have poor signage - they help neither cyclists or pedestrians. We would like to see better separation. (Hester Wells).

A: For West Cambridge we can work with particular cycling groups and users to inform the proposals (Greg Callaghan). On the proposals for the North West Cambridge Development there is a hierarchy of cycle routes that provide opportunities for separation for cyclists who want to go at different speeds and access to buildings / areas. (Jonathan Rose).

Q: For a stretch of about 200m between Madingley Rise and the North West Cambridge Development site, there is no clear cycling connection.

A: This is within the County's Madingley Road cycleway proposals.

Q: You have focussed on two categories that the area will focus on: academic and commercial research, rather than residential – is this a challenge for planning? There are approximately 200 residences on the West Cambridge site and the residents may feel isolated. (Peter Haylor)

A: The University currently has a portfolio of approximately 300 properties, about 200 of which are at West Cambridge. In the near future, the number of the University's residences will increase with 1500 homes on the North West Cambridge Development, so the residential strategy will be developed by the University in this context. The homes on West Cambridge will be within a ten minute walk of the local centre of the North West Cambridge Development and there will be connections between the sites to encourage movement between the two sites. The scale of the residential cannot be recreated at West Cambridge because of the occupancy of the site of the Vet School. A further consideration of how many residences it takes to create a critical mass for a

community on the West Cambridge site does not lend itself to this type of development. When housing at North West Cambridge is delivered the University will review its housing and determine the best way to allocate the properties at West Cambridge. (Heather Topel and Jonathan Rose)

Q: If approximately 4-5,000 people will be working on the West Cambridge site and with the further development of 9,000 houses in St Neots in the next ten years, Madingley Road will be a car park if you don't stop cars coming in or have new roads to bring people in to Cambridge. If you have people around West Cambridge walking to work or using other means of transport then that would help the problem. (Edward Byam Cook)

A: The County Council has public transport principles but has yet to establish how they will deliver them. The City Deal discussions in January may establish priorities for the wider area. On West Cambridge, we will provide links with the North West Cambridge Development and be looking at parking volumes (currently 3200 projected spaces), looking to intercept journeys and getting them off Madingley Road at the earliest possible opportunity. Our access strategy will be developed with the County and will work hard to improve bus access to West Cambridge as well as car parking controls. (Greg Callaghan)

Q: Did you look at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus as a model for the commercial research aspect and how the academics and commercial departments collaborate? (Harvey Bibby)

A: In the past the University has not been focused on commercial research development on its sites, the approach with the North West Cambridge Development has changed this for the University and now is a good time to promote commercial and academic partnerships and spaces. We believe there is a good business plan that promotes research, generates income for the University and provides supporting shared facilities and provision for West Cambridge. (Paul Milliner). The focus for West Cambridge will be with Physical Sciences and technology and partnerships around this research will be investigated. (Jonathan Rose).

4. FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

Heather Topel indicated that the University would like to meet with the Community Group approximately every two months to discuss the emerging proposals and topics that are of interest.

Heather Topel asked if the time of day worked for members. There were no comments raised.

5. CHAIR

Heather Topel invited any expressions of interest to Chair the group. None were received at the meeting but encouraged to contact the University if anyone would like to volunteer.

6. AOB

Q: A suggestion was made to post presentation material in a closed group on facebook so that the slides could be shared amongst closed groups. (Hugh Purser).

A: The University will consider this. In addition, there would be a website that will be dedicated to the West Cambridge masterplan so material can be shared there.