

University of Cambridge

West Cambridge Community Group

Minutes of the Meeting

11 May 2015 in the Gravel Hill Farm Community Room on the North West Cambridge Development.

Attendees:

Harvey Bibby, Lansdowne Road resident (Chair)
Hugh Purser, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents Association
Morcom Lunt, Federation of Residents' Association
Edward Byam Cook, Madingley Parish
Tom Ridgman, WestNet – Institute of Manufacturing
John Evans, Cambridge City Council
Laura Hendrickson, West Cambridge resident
Nicky Blanning, University Accommodation Service - West Cambridge Apartments
Simon Cornish, University Sport Centre
Henry Day, Conduit Head Road resident
Sian Reid, Newnham Ward
Lucy Nethsingha, Newnham Ward
Eddie Powell, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents Association
Hester Wells, Cambridge Cycling Campaign

Heather Topel, University
Paul Milliner, University
Biky Wan, University
Jonathan Rose, Aecom (Consultant)
Jim Strike, Aecom (Consultant)
Gorana Banic, Aecom (Consultant)
Sam Ellis, Aecom (Consultant)

Apologies

Jane Paterson-Todd, Cambridge Ahead
Will Hudson, West Cambridge Safety Committee
Sue Davis, University Childcare Services – Nursery
Stacey Weiser, Cambridge PPF
David Cairns, Coton Parish
Julie Smith, Newnham Ward
Jeremy Sanders, West Cambridge Operations Committee

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF THE CHAIR

Heather Topel welcomed members to Gravel Hill Farm and warmly introduced Harvey Bibby as the Chair of the West Cambridge Community Group who had volunteered to take on the role.

Harvey Bibby introduced himself as the new Chair. He is a resident of Lansdowne Road and also a Chartered Surveyor by profession.

Harvey indicated that he would be happy to be emailed as Chair if members wanted to contact him directly (Harvey@grovemere.co.uk) but encouraged for on-going, project correspondence to be sent to Biky Wan at the University as the main point of contact.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Introductions were made and apologies were presented.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

No comments were made to the minutes of the last meeting.

4. WEST CAMBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Heather Topel said that the University was undertaking discussions with a range of stakeholders related to the project including Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council (with particular reference to the City deal and its local impact on the A428 and Madingley Road corridor which is likely to see proposals shared in May). The development of the masterplan continues with environmental testing being undertaken to inform the emerging proposals. The intention is to submit an outline planning application at the end of Summer 2015.

Heather Topel said that as part of the North West Cambridge Development (NWCD) works, two junctions will be delivered as part of the first phase of development which the group may take interest in given the proximity of works to residents. Work on Madingley Road Junction to the NWCD was due to be completed in the next couple of months. The works on the Huntingdon Road Junction were being coordinated with the County's Cycleway improvement scheme. The traffic management on Madingley Road in particular is dynamic and residents are encouraged to sign up for the Skanska Bulletin if they wish to keep informed about works in advance to plan journeys. The email address to sign up to is nw.cambridge@skanska.co.uk

Q: When will the West Cambridge website be ready? (Harvey Bibby)

A: The website for West Cambridge consultation will be ready before the next meeting. (Biky Wan)

5. MASTERPLANNING PRESENTATION

Jonathan Rose gave a presentation about the masterplan, covering the land uses, community facilities and open spaces. The presentation is available to view on the website.

Jonathan Rose stated that the West Cambridge site is the main site for Physical Sciences and Technology and will deliver shared facilities. Key points included that land in the centre of the site is currently low density and occupied by the Vet School with potential for more space. The Cavendish Laboratory is sub-standard and has hidden facilities and there is the potential for a new Cavendish Laboratory on the current Vet School site.

Q: Can you advance the case for housing to be included on this site? (Lucy Nethsingha)

A: The University has identified the West Cambridge site as a premier location for physical sciences and research. To include residential on this site will undermine the space required for research so there will be no more housing to be delivered on the site. The University is currently reviewing its accommodation strategy, given that 1500 homes will be delivered on the North West Cambridge Development north of Madingley Road, as well as the 306 residences that it currently has (200 of which are on the West Cambridge site) and examine the overall approach to eligibility and the best use of the homes to identify the best way they can be used to support the housing need. Additionally, the University will be looking at how to improve the use of the West Cambridge residences, as well as the experience of the tenants, ensuring linkages with North West are encouraged. (Heather Topel)

Q: Will there be College building accommodation on either the North West or West sites? (Hugh Purser)

A: On North West, there will be 1500 key worker homes and 1500 market homes. There will be accommodation for 2000 postgraduate students – the University will be building some accommodation for colleges but will manage the estate. At the moment, there are no College proposals for North West and West.

Q: What are the conditions for the housing eligibility on North West? (Sian Reid)

A: There are three criteria to be eligible for housing on the North West Cambridge Development: staff must

have a contract with the University or affiliated institutions; their contract must be for 18 hours per week or more; and they must demonstrate that they cannot afford open market rent defined by affordability levels of 30% net household income. The University envisages that 75% of the homes will be occupied by post-doctoral researchers. As a number of people will not be eligible for housing as part of the North West Cambridge Development, the accommodation review might indicate other possible ways to use the residences on West Cambridge. (Heather Topel)

Comment: I still think there is more capacity for residential development on the West Cambridge site. It is a distance for those residences and they will not feel part of the North West Cambridge Development local centre because of the main road that is between the two sites. Creating a work environment has an impact on how the site is used and we don't want a Science Park in this area – we want a vibrant part of the community to be here. (Lucy Nethsingha)

Q: Please can you clarify if the housing on North West is for sale? (Laura Hendrickson)

A: The key worker housing on the North West site will be rental. There is also the market housing on the site available on the open market. The University also has a shared equity scheme that is separate to this.

Comment: I would welcome a policy briefing from officers on the character of sites – in particular on the best practice and best mixed-use areas can create pleasant characteristics and settings.

Q: How can you ignore the future plans to the south in your proposals that are largely on St John's and for housing? (Hugh Purser)

A: The University has support in the Local Plan for the densification of the West Cambridge site in the draft policy and has provided a Statement of Common Ground. It remains to be seen what the Local Plan will include. The land south of West Cambridge is an objection site which is not supported by the City in the Local Plan, but is promoted by St John's College. South of the St John's College land is additional land being promoted for development by the North of Barton Road Land Owners, which includes the University. (Heather Topel). The draft Local Plan indicates that there is no requirement for residential accommodation for the West Cambridge site and that the site assists with meeting the need for employment space. (John Evans)

Jonathan Rose's presentation on the land use for the site included further points:

There will be western and eastern clusters. The Sports Centre area will be reinforced as will the Coton Footpath Area. There will also be a new Nursery with a possible demand projection for a third nursery. The proposals indicate building connectivity between the two sites (West and North West). Frontages and street entrances are an important factor in the West Cambridge proposals which are seeking to change the nature and character of Charles Babbage Road. The land use will create clusters near the lake and deliver flexible buildings. The proposals also seek to promote shared facilities that have social uses such as seminar spaces, open space and amenity for academic and commercial users – at the moment the site is closed paddocks and parking so the proposals will seek to improve the landscape, interior setting of the site and reinforce the mature woodlands. There will be improved social facilities with a mixed food and beverage offering, creating a hub of activity. There would be open landscapes that encourage walking from the east and west forums, which create hubs and arrival spaces. There will be a main public space and possibility of holding events here. The lake is beside the future swimming pool as part of the Sports Centre on the West Forum and could be a special or flexible area of development. The southern aspect could be reinforced.

Q: What will happen to the Old Cavendish setting? It sits between two residential settings (Clerk Maxwell Road and the West Cambridge apartments) Can residential be included here? (Lucy Nethsingha)

A: There will be academic and technology clusters within this section. The existing conditions are highly negotiated sites with departments and occupants that are already in situ. (Jonathan Rose). The Department of Engineering will move to the site and integrate their departments. The scale of their needs requires the whole area and we will be working around buildings at how the new department will be located. We will be looking

at permeability and the existing conditions to create better microclimates on site, changing the open space and relationships between cars and buildings. (Heather Topel)

Comment: The Institute for Manufacturing would like to offer more family friendly and hands on events so the open environment would encourage this.

Q: The “visible” nature of the site is important – having a public face to the area (Sian Reid)

A: Two key departments (Engineering and Physics) want to engage more and hope to undertake more public facing activities. The South facing façade occupied by the Cavendish will be improved to be more welcoming an entrance to the site with the private yet essential storage needs to be appropriately placed.

Jim Strike provided a presentation of the approach to the Outline Planning Application (OPA). The key points included that the OPA would be submitted late Summer which would establish parameters and guidelines but include flexibility for design. Following the Outline approval, a series of Reserved Matters Applications would be submitted on detailed design.

Q: Has the idea of an underpass or bridge on Madingley Road been progressed? (Hugh Purser)

A: The transport consultant, Peter Brett Associates, is currently assessing data on cycle and pedestrian movements and the possibilities of implementing a bridge or underpass. The County will also be undertaking testing of movements.

Heights discussion: In the Outline planning application we are looking for opportunities to accentuate the heights in particular areas, in particular at Madingley Road to reinforce the road and in the East Forum.

Q: You seem to have located the high buildings that will cause maximum offence that are sensitive to existing local residents, particularly at Clerk Maxwell Road and low-level homes on Conduit Head Road – why have you not looked at locating the high rise buildings near the Park & Ride or the Observatory? (Henry Day) The Material Sciences building is high at 38m and with an additional 11m on top, the tall buildings will be very tall (Morcom Lunt).

A: These proposals are a precursor to the Environmental Impact Assessment that will be undertaken with LVIA – the visual modelling will show the impact and will be undertaken before the application is submitted (Heather Topel).

Q: Will there be high buildings over the West Cambridge residences? They will tower over the flats. (Laura Hendrickson)

A: The relationship between buildings is key to the design principles and it will be important to retain daylight for the apartments. (Heather Topel)

Q: Can the heights aspect, particularly the impact for low level residents, be looked at as it is an important issue? (Harvey Bibby)

A: The University will check the receptors for testing (Heather Topel)

Q: I don't think you are being ambitious enough with heights, particularly on the commercial side- it is an opportunity to showcase Cambridge and have an iconic building on the site. (Hugh Purser)

A: We have been thinking about the opportunity for an innovation centre of height. The heights are constrained by the volumes of employment that can be served by the highways network. (Jonathan Rose)

Q: Is the nursery allowance for the site too large? (Harvey Bibby)

A: Currently, there are proposals for two nurseries for the site and evidence of demand for places. On the North West Cambridge Development there is a 1000sq.m+ nursery (Heather Topel)

Comment: Your transport proposals will be interesting – are you conducting surveys for existing traffic and the projected increase in traffic? The Sports Centre is making the area a living space and stretches the life of the day in the area. (Hugh Purser)

Q: How do young people get to the School? (Henry Day)

A: [post-meeting note: information about the Primary School can be found on the University of Cambridge Primary School website: <http://www.universityprimaryschool.org.uk/>]

Q: What pedestrian access is there to the Park & Ride from the site? (Henry Day)

A: There is a pedestrian access route from the north-east side of the Park & Ride to the North West site.

Q: I have heard that Material Sciences are already at capacity – how is provision for departments being made? (Morcom Lunt)

A: The department is at full capacity and there is a spatial planning exercise that will identify additional growth space required that will be integrated into their future proposals. It will be the same practice for other departments. (Paul Milliner)

Q: Will you be using existing data to extrapolate the anticipated traffic to the site for the future development (Morcom Lunt)

A: The academic spaces will use extrapolated data based on surveys. For the commercial spaces, the County's traffic modelling will be used. (Heather Topel)

Q: The off-site infrastructure crossing points, in particular at the crossing of Queen's Road and Burrell Road need to be better for journeys. (Morcom Lunt)

A: The transport testing, through the County's model, will identify if there is a need for improvements to off-site infrastructure. When we present back the strategy we will be sure to review these junctions.

6. NEXT MEETING

The group indicated that the Transport would be ideal for the next topic.

Sian Reid requested an update on the outstanding West Cambridge Section 106 obligation related to transport.

Morcom Lunt asked for a clear statement on the transport objectives before coming to the group for presentation.

Heather Topel encouraged members to attend the local authorities' North West Forum meeting on 16 June at St Augustine's Church as that would have a presentation on the emerging City Deal proposals including the A428 and Bus prioritisation works along Madingley Road.

Heather Topel indicated that for the next meeting to cover the topic of transport, the timing would be dependent on the development of the strategy. The Chair requested that Biky Wan circulate dates accordingly to suit the strategy timescales in the same manner as previously undertaken.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.