

University of Cambridge

West Cambridge Community Group

Minutes of the Meeting

2 March 2016 in the Hauser Forum Seminar Room on the West Cambridge site.

Attendees:

Harvey Bibby, Lansdowne Road resident (Chair)
Hugh Purser, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents Association
Eddie Powell, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents Association
Henry Day, Conduit Head Road
Dai Davies, North Newnham Residents Association
Ian Sutcliffe, Madingley Road Residents Association
Edward Byam Cook, Madingley Parish Council
Rod Cantrill, Newnham Ward Councillor
Mike Donelan, University Accommodation Service - West Cambridge Apartments
Nick Brooking, University Sport Centre
Alex Reid, East Paddock Campaign
Will Hudson, West Cambridge Safety Committee
John Evans, Cambridge City Council

Heather Topel, University
Biky Wan, University
Jonathan Rose, AECOM (Consultant)
Nick Askew, AECOM (Consultant)
Elizabeth Crump, AECOM (Consultant)

Apologies

Sian Reid, Newnham Ward
Lucy Nethsingha, Newnham Ward
Morcom Lunt, Federation of Residents' Association
Jon Elphick, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents' Association
Nicky Blanning, University Accommodation Service - West Cambridge Apartments
Sue Davis, University Childcare Services

WELCOME

Harvey Bibby welcomed the group.

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTION OF THE DEPUTY CHAIR

Introductions were made and apologies were presented as above.

Will Hudson introduced himself as the Deputy Chair and has other roles within the University and understanding of committees to offer the role.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

3. WEST CAMBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Heather Topel thanked members for their commitment to the group and patience with reference to the fact that the group had not met since May 2015. During the period, the team had been working through issues raised through consultation and addressing the problems, including aspects related to the transport modelling which would be under detailed discussion next week. She acknowledged that transport was an important

topics for the group and requested detail be deferred to next week when the transport consultants could be present to discuss, but welcomed any questions to be taken in the intervening period which may inform the brief for next week's presentation and discussion. At this meeting, key changes to the masterplan would be covered including density/open space; building heights; relocation of the energy centre; and amenities.

Heather Topel said that the priority projects had received a boost and £75m of government funding had been secured for the Cavendish III. Funding has also been secured for the next phase of the Department of Engineering move to West Cambridge.

There was on-going discussion with the planning officers and that the new Outline Planning Application was due for submission at the end of April 2016. Thereafter there will be the opportunity for formal consultation through the Planning process.

Q: What will be the cost of the new Cavendish laboratory? (Edward Byam Cook)

A: The cost will be more than £75m which will require the University to undertake fundraising for the facility. (Heather Topel). [Post-meeting note: £320m is the overall figure which the department has discussed.]

Heather Topel reminded the group of the top three priorities of the site to be a first-class working environment, a sustainable place and the premier location for physical sciences and technology. She continued to outline that the masterplanning process was to improve on the existing site by reflecting on the whole development and environment to drive the scheme into the future.

4. MASTERPLANNING PRESENTATION

Heather Topel said that the masterplan review has been undertaken and a revised masterplan drafted in February 2015 did meet the original objectives, however through extensive consultation, some issues have been raised and the team have been working through the proposals to adapt the plan to see what can be done about the issues raised, namely: open space, building heights, the energy centre, amenities, residential development, and transport.

Heather Topel passed onto Jonathan Rose to present how the masterplan has responded to these issues (except transport which would be covered in the next meeting).

Energy centre

Jonathan Rose said that previously the energy centre had been located on the north part of the site, generally opposite Conduit Head Road, and this has now been moved to the western edge of the site, away from the location previously stated.

Open space

Jonathan Rose said that the open space had previously been considered as narrow in the centre of the site. The new proposals see an enhancement to the open space in the centre of the site and this will be protected into the Parameter Plans and Design Guidelines. There will be decent amounts of open space within the first phase of development which will include ecological enhancements to the south. Within the clusters, there will be green space around buildings, e.g. Schlumberger on the west side and in the Eastern cluster there will be space amongst the buildings between the new Computer Laboratory and shared facilities hub, which should be delivered within five years. There will be a proper entrance to enhance the Computer Laboratory and the Whittle Laboratory, and there will be a momentum of activity in this area with the UKCRIC building being developed by Grimshaws as Engineering moves their activities gradually over time from Fen Causeway to West Cambridge; in addition to the plans for the Cavendish III. A new entrance and address with a new public forecourt for Engineering will be next to the Computer Laboratory with green spaces and pedestrian /cycle paths between the Whittle Lab which will remove the dead end and enhance opportunity for inter-departmental connections. People can park their cars and then walk to their site in the shared public realm which will change the road dominated site.

Jonathan Rose said that the second phase of development will see the area near the eastern lake development with a connection to the East Forum. When an alternative location is found for the Vet School it will move off site and open up the middle of the site for further departments. There will also be the intensification of the cycle paths with grade separation at the lower part of the Maxwell building. In the East Forum, when the Cavendish is moved, the lakes will join and link to the buildings. Currently the lake is private but in the future there will be a walkway and this will open up the lake and the buildings surrounding.

Jonathan Rose said that when the development is at full capacity and the Vet School has moved the central gardens would open up in full.

Building heights along the key spaces

Jonathan Rose said that heights along key open spaces will be considered to allow sunlight into the key open spaces and to enable light to penetrate between buildings. Views to the Green Belt will be protected from the south and along parts of the edge, for instance at Clerk Maxwell Road and along Madingley Road. There have been Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) undertaken at strategic points agreed with the City Council planning officers. These have been run three times and often as a result of the LVIA it has changed the building scales which has informed the building heights at key places. The LVIAs will be going to the local authority and we can share this with you in the future. As a result of the LVIAs, building heights have changed at locations and there is also more set back from the perimeter of the site.

Utilities and a multi-storey car park would be located on the western part of the site. The routes will be defined and Ada Lovelace Road would be opened up for car parking access. The parking will be amongst existing woodland and lake and have pedestrian and cycle links to it.

Along Madingley Road, opposite Lansdowne Road there would be a modest setting with buildings at 3-4 storeys, developed in around 10 years plus time.

The Material Sciences building would be the highest point in the southern cluster and buildings would not exceed that point in the area. Buildings from the lake will be graduated from two to three to four storeys at the West Forum. We want to plant more trees to better define the space.

Amenities

Feedback about the site has referred to the lack of amenities. Heather Topel said that the University was committed to creating a shared facilities hub as part of the first phase of the West Cambridge site. The brief for the shared facilities hub is in development at the moment, but it could include a shared library, learning facilities, meeting rooms, as well as food offerings – both volume and higher end catering. Additionally as the brief develops, it could include a licensed facility, and a facility that is open at different times of the day. The Merton Hall Farmhouse is currently used as a multi-faith centre on the site and they could be located in the future shared facilities hub as well as using the new Community Centre on the North West Cambridge Development that will be completed this year.

Q: What has happened to the commercial development aspect – has it changed because of the building heights responses? (Hugh Purser)

A: The proposals for commercial development have not changed and are located towards the west of the site. The energy centre and a multi-storey car park are confirmed on the west of the site. The area near the lake will be defined as landscaped as a drop off point and the area will have flexible spaces. (Jonathan Rose).

Comment: I am pleased to hear that the energy centre and tall buildings have been removed from the Madingley Road side opposite Conduit Head Road. Will you put the material on the website? (Henry Day)

A: Yes. Also, a full detailed report on the LVIA will also be submitted as part of the application and publicly available. (Heather Topel)

Q: Are there six blocks for the Cavendish III?

A: The six-eight blocks are illustrative of the space requirement on the plan, but the building has not yet been designed. The buildings will have a set back from the edge of the site and will step up in their height. Views

from Madingley Road have been taken on the Winter Solstice to see how the perspectives will look then with the landscape as part of the assessment.

Q: Is all the car parking on the West? (Eddie Powell)

A: There are three car parks – (north east point, north, and south west of the site). Car parking will be in multi-storey car parks and will include basement parking to ensure that the facility will be no greater than existing buildings (three storeys high). The offset will have little impact on Clerk Maxwell Road. (Jonathan Rose)

Q: What will the development look like given that the landscape is very flat? (Edward Byam Cook)

A: We have agreed key locations with the City Council to assess the visual impact in Summer and Winter and this will show what the development will look like as a whole. The team has run the LVIA three times so far with changes to the massing and heights to see the visual impact. (Jonathan Rose). After running the assessments, the heights have been reduced as a result. We were concerned about the edge of the site and when you arrive so we have used the stepped massing, receding towards the edges. (Heather Topel).

Q: I welcome the green open space to the south of the new Cavendish. How much has it enlarged by? Additionally, the ability to have sunlight and day light into the Cavendish and shared use spaces would be welcome. (Alex Reid)

A: The open space immediately south of the new Cavendish is about 1.5 acres which is an increase of around 20% in Phase One. For Phase two, the increase will be 30% and be in the middle of the site. Around the gardens, buildings will be restricted to three storeys and consideration of the road will also be given to allow sunlight into the space (Jonathan Rose). The central open space along with the edges and woodland will in total see 23% of the site as open space, either as retained or newly created. (Heather Topel).

Q: How confident can we be that the green space will be delivered where the Vet School is currently? (Alex Reid)

A: The space will be retained as open space and be secured as a zone in planning, and development in that area will be protected. The Vet School will have to be relocated in order for the open space to be delivered which would be an issue of timing and confidence. Through the planning process, we would agree a trigger that would be in the Section 106 agreement linked to the threshold of employment space. This will be a legal agreement. (Heather Topel). Ensuring that this space is set within the parameter plan and then having that contractually agreed is how this would be secured (John Evans). The green space will be secured in the Design Guidelines and the Parameter Plans. (Jonathan Rose).

Q: Could you talk about the phasing of the Vet School? (Rod Cantrill)

A: There is currently a feasibility study underway into potential sites for the Vet School. When a new site is agreed then the Vet School will be relocated. The open space south of the new Cavendish will be available in the first phase, but the rest of the Vet School site will not be available for development until later in the development programme. (Heather Topel).

Q: With the increase in open space, has the floor space gone down? (Harvey Bibby)

A: There will be concentrated development in the east and there has been a reduction in the density in some areas such as the north of the site, but in the centre there is more concentration and volume. It has been redistributed on a phase by phase basis. (Jonathan Rose)

Q: How open is the site going to be? The Sports Centre is perhaps one of the most isolated buildings and the Nursery is also on site – how will these parts be serviced and welcoming for drop off and pick up for instance? (Nick Brooking)

A: Promoting access to the Sports Centre is important and we can have a more detailed discussion around parking and servicing with you. (Heather Topel).

LANDSCAPE PRESENTATION

Nick Askew from AECOM gave a presentation about the emerging landscape strategy. The context of the fringe of the city is used in part to design the site and the pre-existing spaces will be used to enhance and improve the site. The strong green band by the M11 connects to the North West Cambridge site and green corridors

will connect to the existing infrastructure across the road from High Cross. The highway is over dominant at the moment and landscape will be used to make the area more appropriate for pedestrians and cyclists. At the southern edge there will be a wider corridor that will be an ecological asset as the lakes will be linked to the drainage and sustainability of the site.

The landscape strategy has looked outside of the site for influence to bring connections to the site from the city. There are three key elements on influence: Agricultural (from the southern edge with native hedgerows); Transitional (from landscape that is publicly inaccessible but is borrowed space, which is used as a narrative from the city and used as boundary treatment); and Structured landscape (with defined open green space and straight paths; where the beauty of the space is the space itself).

There will be a strong framework of the site with a significant tree boundary which will we'd like to extend and increase to maintain Madingley Road and Clerk Maxwell Road, as well as extending the green structure into the road itself and along Ada Lovelace Road. For north-south routes, there will be opportunities for creating pedestrian and cyclists routes connecting them to corridors and the ecological area. High Cross is a hard road with borrowed landscape and planting with the possibility to create open space even on the road corridor. At the southern end, there will be a woodland area of existing trees which provides a key context of the site - this will be extended into other areas to connect to the north west and Schlumberger and connect into the central gardens. There will be minor modification to the West Forum so it is more usable and possibly include trees for shelter and create a micro-climate. In the eastern cluster there will be a thin corridor but with borrowed landscape to create amenity space and use. There will be overlay of green infrastructure to help pedestrians more than cars which will help inform visitors that this areas is a priority for cyclists and pedestrians. There will also be drop off points and cycling hubs – vegetation will be retained but with key legible routes. The lakes will be more usable space on the southern ecological corridor. The lake at the East forum links to the site's drainage and the trees will be retained.

The central gardens will be a key piece of landscape that brings the site together with the agricultural, borrowed and formal landscape.

Q: The cycle routes look attractive and a good links from town to the departments, but people will come by car. Shouldn't you put car parking to the west, as the sports centre will also require car parking? (Ian Sutcliffe)

A: The car parks are distributed across the site and concentrated in three areas to allow people to park and walk to their work. The north/east parking is for University parking for those working in the east area of the site and would allow 3-4 minutes' walk to their workplace. The second car park in the first phase is the one on the west with access from High Cross and that would allow for a 3-4 minute walk to the Sports Centre. The University will own and operate the car parks. The third car park will be when the development is at full capacity and located off Madingley Road with access from High Cross (Jonathan Rose)

Q: Are the proposed trees deciduous and will you have phased planting that will last forever? (Edward Byam Cook).

A: At the edge of the site there is a woodland and the trees are predominantly deciduous and will look different in the winter. We are not looking at evergreens but are looking for appropriate trees e.g. beech, hedges to provide screening at a lower level. There will be a phased approach that will be the key to building out the development. Category A trees have a lifespan in excess of 300 years. (Nick Askew). We will have a site landscape management plan which the University will secure with the City Council (Heather Topel).

Comment: All of the trees on the corridor at the wood were trees planted 10 years ago and have embedded so that is good that someone thought that through (Hugh Purser).

Q: Is there adequate car parking on site which includes 2m sq ft of employment space, 15000 jobs and 3000 car parking spaces? How many storeys of car parking are there? (Harvey Bibby).

A: There are three multi-storey car parks on site and each will have around 700/800 parking spaces in them. They will be stepped sections so there will be 4-5 storeys in total but equivalent to 3 storeys of academic space because they will be in the basement. Along the north face of the car park near academic building, they will benefit from existing woodland but we can't plan any more on the north (Jonathan Rose). There will also be

some car parking on street, at grade or in undercrofts of buildings. Rod Cantrill said that the car parks at Addenbrooke's is at 1700 spaces.

JONATHAN ROSE THEN PRESENTED SOME DATA RELATED TO PHASING

Jonathan mentioned that in the first phase of development the University is working to the existing masterplan and existing development ceilings, although this would be exceeded slightly in the east for academic space. That is in the context of the new overall application in which the space for academic, shared facilities and commercial would increase.

There will be change to access on site and cars will be concentrated on car parks with the full build out of the West Forum and academic spaces. The full capacity will see the building on the Vet School site.

Q: If you are developing along the lines of the 1999 consent in your first phase won't you breach the level by which shared facilities is required for the site in the first phase of the new development? How many people currently use the site - 4000? (Rod Cantrill)

A: The shared facilities does not sit in one particular use classification, for example, it is not pure amenity as there is lecture space / library / food etc. We can come back to you on the numbers for this. Approximately 4000 employees currently use the site, plus students. (Heather Topel)

5. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on 10 March with the emerging Transport strategy.

The Chair requested that the new views be shown at the meeting on the 10th March. Jonathan Rose said that the team is progressing with the works and would be bringing the information to the City Council's Quality Panel on the 18 March and then they will be carried into the detailed design guidelines and shared at that stage.

The Chair said that feeding into the process was good and that it sounded like people were pleased to hear the feedback at this session. He encouraged the group that when the formal consultation was underway then the group should also make comment that way as a collective as well. The Chair welcomed correspondence by email and his address is: Harvey@grovemere.co.uk

Heather Topel reiterated the previous offer that if individual residents groups wanted briefings and the opportunity to ask local questions of interest then that offer is available.

6. AOB

No other business was raised.