

University of Cambridge

West Cambridge Community Group

Minutes of the Meeting

14 November 2016 in the Hauser Forum Seminar Room on the West Cambridge site.

Attendees:

Harvey Bibby, Lansdowne Road resident (Chair)
Angela Chadwyck-Healey, Madingley Road Residents Association
Simon Cornish, University Sports Centre
Henry Day, Conduit Head Road resident
Humphrey Gleave, North Newnham Residents' Association
Stuart Hawkins, Madingley Parish Council
Peter Haylor, Merton Hall House
Penny Heath, North Newnham Residents' Association
Will Hudson, West Cambridge Safety Committee
Eddie Powell, Clerk Maxwell Road Residents' Association
Tom Ridgman, Westnet & IFM

Heather Topel, University
Jonathan Rose, AECOM
Jim Strike, AECOM
John Hopkins, Peter, Brett Associates
Biky Wan, University

Apologies:

Nicholas Brooking, University Sports Centre
Sue Davis, University Childcare Services
John Evans, Cambridge City Council
Nicky Blanning, University Accommodation Service - West Cambridge Apartments
Lucy Nethsingha, Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Councillor, Newnham Ward (stepping down due to her position on the Planning Committee)

1. WELCOME

Harvey Bibby welcomed the group to the meeting.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made and apologies presented.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Harvey Bibby highlighted one outstanding question relating to the height of Madingley Road. Jonathan Rose confirmed that the height of Madingley Road varies between the M11 to Clerk Maxwell Road and is between AOD 17.5m and 19.5m.

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

4. WEST CAMBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Heather Topel thanked the group for attending the meeting.

At the last Community Group meeting the priority projects were discussed and Heather Topel stated that the Cavendish Laboratory is still a strategic objective for the University and the planning application is expected to be submitted in April/May 2017. A detailed planning application had been submitted for the Civil Engineering

building and the consultation period is nearing its end. The City Council will consider this planning application. Pre-application consultation was shared with local residents, particularly Clerk Maxwell Road as the closest neighbours to the facility.

Q: Is the Civil Engineering building going into the old 1999 outline plan? (Penny Heath)

A: This application is being submitted as a stand-alone and will be determined on its own but complementary to the outline plan. The floor space won't be double counted. (Heather Topel).

Heather Topel reiterated that the outline application for the West Cambridge site seeks to realise the full potential for the site and promote innovation. The vision is to create a premier site for physical sciences and technology and an improved quality of site and place in a coordinated and sustainable way. The outline plan shows indicative plans and through this process, the boundaries of development are being tested as well as mitigation required for the site proposals. There is a combination of mitigation and development changes. The outline application talks about volumes of space, over phases and time. The Cavendish will be relocated and Engineering space will be increased. The Shared Facilities Hub will also be promoted and will be available throughout the day for users. Commercial space is permitted under the previous plan. The Vet School will be relocated in the future and there will be opportunities to redevelop its site. In the new Outline Plan, there will be stop-points to show the phasing which will be tested, particularly the transport assessment. We have received comment through the planning process from residents, local authorities, stakeholders and are now in discussion with local authorities about how the University will respond to comments - this evening's presentation is a preview to the changes proposed. We will be submitting changes on areas and the Council will re-consult on the proposed changes.

Q: Where is the car park? (Humphrey Gleave).

A: There is one on the north east, north and south west of the site. One car park wouldn't be sufficient for the whole site. (Heather Topel)

5. FEEDBACK FROM THE FORMAL CONSULTATION AND POTENTIAL RESPONSES

Jim Strike, Jonathan Rose and John Hopkins gave an overview on the issues raised through the formal consultation for the outline planning application and some proposed ways of responding to issues.

Heights: Overall there will be a reduction of the number of tall buildings from 10 (previously included in the outline plan) to 4 with buildings stepped from the edge - this is a key area that has been moderated in response to the consultation feedback. Heights are moderated in the foreground and pushing back height deeper into the plan. We expect this to be moderated significantly. These views are still for review with the City Council. (Jonathan Rose)

Trees: Buffer zones will be part of the plan to ensure the long-term health of trees and the team is looking at particular trees and the zones to enhance, particularly around the edges of the site. A workshop with the City Council was held and a tree management strategy was decided upon for the site and how we can ensure the integrity and success of the woodland area and landscape for screening with principles for enhancement, felling and restoration. (Jim Strike)

Transport: The masterplan is affected by movement and sustainable travel is part of the development. 3000 car parking spaces is allowed in the existing permission and the hope is to reduce this level for the future. There are strategic developments taking place around Cambridge which is the context of the project (A14 improvements and City Deal). There is an adaptive phased approach to move the development proposals forward but to take stock of the external developments and enable flexibility to respond to those circumstances. Improvements on Madingley Road corridor have already been made that were part of the previous plan. Consultation with the Cycling Group and Clerk Maxwell Road which have been incorporated into the proposals. Further surveys have been undertaken. (John Hopkins)

Drainage and flood risk: More information is due to be submitted to the local authorities. The site already includes drainage infrastructure. (Jim Strike)

Energy and sustainability: Progress has been made to develop the energy strategy for a low carbon future. We want to include some flexibility on the energy strategy in order to future proof this. (Jim Strike)

Amenities: Commitment to delivering the shared amenities hub which has been welcomed by the local authorities and more discussion about the detail is being undertaken with them. (Jim Strike)

Parameter plans: The City Council has asked the University to refine the plans so they are clearer on open space. (Jim Strike).

Design Guidelines: More clarity on the mandatory elements are being included in the revised document. (Jim Strike).

These documents are being updated with a view that they can be submitted by the end of 2016. Future consultation on the resubmission is likely to be early 2017.

Q: You have some good detail on heights across all sides with the building heights graduated into the site, except on the north side - Madingley Road – will they be similar, i.e. at 3-4 storeys? (Harvey Bibby)

A: The same principle extends to the north and we are looking at greater tree protection along Madingley Road. (Jonathan Rose)

Q: The Unite Building and surrounding area has an ugly power plant that feels industrial – can that be improved to soften the impact? (Harvey Bibby)

A: That is outside of the University site but it might be possible to talk to the County about the highway boundary. We are protecting the view from the other side of Madingley Road and the trees. (Heather Topel)

Q: Will the revisions in the submitted material be clear? (Henry Day)

A: Yes, we will have a cover letter that includes a summary of what the changes are and the updated documents. Where a new document has been revised we will include that commentary (Jim Strike).

Q: The drawings of the man on the winter solstice is helpful and clear. Relating to the vehicle access up the lime tree avenue (near to the Vet School) I would be pleased for it to be cycle route but not vehicle access. (Henry Day)

A: We are expecting some vehicle access for service vehicles at this point but it will not be a through route. The team is commissioning the transport route for the Cavendish and we can provide some dedicated information for that to Lansdowne Road and Conduit Head Road residents as part of the consultation for that plan. (Heather Topel).

Q: I have not seen any indication of the transport hub or under-ground proposals – are there any thoughts for this. (Penny Heath)

A: This application does not rely on the City Deal but we do not want to impede it so the phased adaptive approach will allow flexibility for this. The University wants an integrated approach to transport and an interchange on this site could be included in the West Forum on the site. We do not know where the A428 and Western Orbital routes will be going. There are two main forums on the site – West Forum and East Forum - these might be places for the interchanges. High Cross can accommodate buses. If there was a bridge then it could land on Charles Babbage Road. We wouldn't put an underground station on its own on the West Cambridge site; it has to be part of the network. Some areas have basements and others have vibration sensitive requirements. These decisions about underground transport networks are not likely to be taken before Spring when a determination of the West Cambridge planning application may be made. (Heather Topel).

Q: Has the City Council said there is a capacity issue on cycling? Silver Street and Queen's Road have problems already with congestion and cycling conflicts (Penny Heath)

A: The Burrell's Walk route does have a lot of traffic. We do not think that we can address cycling by promoting more journeys on that route, but have developed another solution with a parallel route to the south, taking trips out of Burrell's Walk, which includes encouraging cyclists to use West Road joining to Silver Street. (John Hopkins). We have not proposed a bus route down Adams Road. The County Council has not determined the final destination for buses related to the City Deal proposals so the University cannot comment on that. The University has promoted cycling through Adams Road. (Heather Topel). The Council have applauded parallel routes to spread the journeys.

Q: Can you look at timings for cyclists to spread the journeys? (Humphrey Gleave)

A: Timings are being considered with the academic departments and also use of shared facilities are being investigated. The travel plan encourages compressed working weeks and flexibility to change behavior and travel but is in the context of wider University HR policies. (John Hopkins)

Q: What plans are there for cars exiting the site to travel north? (Angela Chadwyck-Healey)

A: We want to reduce car usage as much as possible. Unless staff have a valid reason to park their car they will not get a parking space. There will also be the reassignment of trips through the North West Cambridge Development to enable journeys north. Priority will be for cyclists and pedestrians but there will be car use and there will distribution across the routes including the new North West junction as well as Lady Margaret Road and Storey's Way. (Heather Topel)

Q: Are there 10000 cycle racks on the North West site? Will they be coming down Madingley Road (Angela Chadwyck-Healey)

A: Yes there will be over 10,000 cycle spaces and these will be provided over the long-term development build out and parking will be distributed around the development. There will be high volumes of cyclists on the development as we are encouraging that as sustainable travel, but there is a network for cyclists to use depending on your destination. (Heather Topel).

Q: Can you clarify the plan for the car parking in the north east corner? (Eddie Powell).

A: We are looking at set-backs for buildings and trees as a buffer along the boundary of the site and this may lead to a reduction in the scale of the car park. We have also looked at splitting the exit between Clerk Maxwell and JJ Thomson. We do not need this car park immediately. The changes will be in the scale and may be reduced, but this is currently a live discussion so our comments reflect the mid-point in the dialogue by our team which will be discussed with the local authorities. There is an existing car park on the north-east of the site (Park and Cycle) and that access is still being used. That car park will operate until development becomes into use. In early 2017, we will know the access plan for the car park as well as the potential size of car park. The buildings could be screened or designed appropriately. (Heather Topel)

Q: Does the drainage from the stream go to the Coton Path? Can you control the open ditch by the tennis courts which has a blockage? (Harvey Bibby)

A: Yes, the plan seeks to make capacity on-site through the drainage by deepening the swales and mitigate with landscape. (Heather Topel)

Q: Can the Adams Road Bird Sanctuary be included in the consultation? The quality of water becomes so sterile and we hope the University estates can help with some silting issues. (Penny Heath)

A: Water quality was not on the issues list and we can follow up on this with officers. (Heather Topel)

Q: What are the public benefits of this scheme – where is the culture and fun? Can there be viewing towers on the tall buildings? (Penny Heath)

A: Creating vibrancy and vitality is something that the University is looking for on the site. There are no plans for a look-out tower, but we can reflect on that suggestion - we are looking at public access for other buildings. The site is currently open for public access although it may not feel like this. We want to provide places for people to go to, with an offer for people to enjoy. There is also the extension to the sports centre and a greater offer for the nursery and major open spaces. (Heather Topel). These amenities will be outward looking and accessible and with more people out in the areas. (Jim Strike)

Q: Relating to the potential to have the Cambourne to Cambridge bus route – we want to get the Girton interchange up and running with – is there integration in North West and West sites for buses? (Stuart Hawking)

A: The main network includes roads that can include buses. We would encourage bus movements through North West Cambridge Development. Near to Girton interchange is a future junction onto Huntingdon Road. The adaptive phased approach allows the University to respond to development as well as what is going on in Cambridge. Specific measures and projects to support the first phase will be secured. For the rest of the development build out, there will be financial measures for the future which funding can support as we cannot anticipate now what will happen in the future. (Heather Topel).

Q: Are there any barriers to providing the bus service? (Penny Heath)

A: We have talked to the bus operators - the University cannot support independent bus services but can support additional services. (John Hopkins). We have started a new relationship with Whippet and we can reflect on this with the Travel Plan Manager. (Heather Topel). We will work with the operators to see how we can deliver buses.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting could be scheduled for February / March 2017 to reflect on the updated proposals for the the Cavendish III building.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.