

PLANNING - PRE-APPLICATION DEVELOPER PRESENTATIONS

9 September 2015
10.00 - 11.30 am

Present: Blencowe, Cantrill, Gawthrop, Hipkin, Holland, Moore, Reid, C. Smart and M. Smart.

Officers

Sharon Brown, New Neighbourhoods Development Manager (Chair)
Mark Parsons, Principal Planner
John Evans, Senior Planner

Developer Team

Heather Topel, University of Cambridge
Paul Milliner, University of Cambridge
Jonathan Rose, Aecom
Jim Strike, Aecom
Sam Ellis, Aecom

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Price

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

**3 PRE-APPLICATION DEVELOPER BRIEFING - Masterplan
Review, West Cambridge Site, South of Madingley Road**

The West Cambridge Site, south of Madingley Road, accommodates academic buildings and departments as well as some commercial research. The site has long term tenants such as the Vet School, British Antarctic Survey, Schlumberger Research Centre and the Cavendish Laboratory. Over the last 15 years the site has been developed in line with an existing outline planning permission. New buildings include

Physics of Medicine, the Institute for Manufacturing and more recently Materials Science. The site also accommodates the West Cambridge Sports Centre and residential accommodation for University staff.

In line with the Draft Cambridge Local Plan 2014 the University wishes to increase density on the site to provide additional employment and academic floorspace, while at the same time address shortcomings of the existing masterplan. These include a public realm dominated by the car and a lack of amenities.

The University's vision is for a world-class, well connected, research and development environment which supports entrepreneurship and collaboration with industry.

The new masterplan is still the subject of pre-application discussion and an Environmental Impact Assessment, and there will be a need to review the existing Section 106 commitments. This briefing is intending for officers and the University to update Members on progress to date and to discuss the key issues ahead of a target submission for a formal new outline application.

1) Key Points from Developer Presentation

- **University's Vision** is for a world class, well connected development which benefits the Cambridge and United Kingdom economy.
- **Transformation** of the site is intended through the new masterplan.
- **Phasing** - The site will be built out over a 25 year period.
- **Adaptable and efficient** buildings will be delivered. Future occupiers not yet known for most of the site.
- **Public transport** - Significant investment to be provided.
- **Reduced reliance on private car** key to the overall approach.
- **Connectivity** improvement integral, both cycle and pedestrian.
- **Cavendish Laboratory** is not currently fit for purpose and is a priority project.
- **Landscaped setting for west forum** to be delivered early.
- **Commercial Programme** – Schlumberger is the seed for the new programme.
- **Vet School** – space will be optimised for the next 10 years.

- **Open Space** – an appropriate scale will be delivered in the third phase.
- **Informal Shared Facilities** to be provided at the East Forum.
- **Hierarchy of catering venues** to be provided.
- **Northern European** good practice examples explained.
- **Illustrative masterplan** explained in context.
- **Draft Parameter Plans** – Robust design guidelines to accompany submission.

Member Questions/Comments

1) *There are already key worker residents on the site. Would you have sited them on West Cambridge with the benefit of hindsight and what can be done to improve their social isolation?*

- The existing 206 flats at West Cambridge is a substantial proportion of the University's current portfolio. This will be radically changed with the 700 key worker flats to be provided at the North West Cambridge Development (NWCD). 1500 units will be provided in the long term.
- Critical mass provided at NWCD will help to address social isolation.
- The existing flats at West Cambridge may be used differently in the future.
- One possibility might be for shorter term serviced apartments.

2) *The proposed open space is long and narrow, how will its function as a route way affect the level of amenity?*

- The proposed central spine will incorporate a cycle route, but it will not be the principal link through the campus.
- It is not likely to accommodate significant numbers of bicycle movements.

3) *The principal cycle link into the City is key to the success of the proposal and it is currently inadequate for further traffic.*

- Transport testing is underway through the County Council's CSR model.
- The transport assessment will identify mitigation.

- North/south cycle routes will also be analysed through the modelling process.

4) *How is the number of people related to amenities on campus?*

- There are no fixed standards for open space or amenities for an academic/commercial development such as West Cambridge.
- There are a further two phases of the sports centre within the proposals.
- Timing of delivery is uncertain and capital funding is important.
- University wish to work proactively with the City to deliver the swimming pool.
- The indicative masterplan will provide approximately 15,000 jobs as compared with around 4,000 currently on campus.

5) *The proposed new masterplan appears to lack a large strategic open space.*

- A new urban park will be provided at Storeys Field, on the NWCD, a walk of only 10 minutes.
- NWCD offers amenity for West Cambridge.
- There is no need for a new major primary open space.
- The masterplan is employment led and appropriate for future occupiers.

6) *There is a major opportunity to link the NWCD and West Cambridge. Radical interventions are needed to link the two sites, such as a green bridge.*

- Improvements to Madingley Road will be critical to deliver the new masterplan.
- Signalisation to be introduced at Madingley Rise.
- The capacity of Madingley Road will remain the same, but vehicle speed will be reduced to 30 mph.

7) *Phasing: How will delivery be different from the previous masterplan?*

- Design principles of active frontages and street scenes will be embedded in the accompanying design guidance.

8) *Is the academic and commercial need for development new or displaced from elsewhere?*

- The academic development is part of the ongoing relocation strategy from the City centre. Physical Sciences and Technology will continue to be relocated.
- The existing site is not fit for purpose for some existing users.
- Accommodation at the Cavendish Laboratory is inadequate.
- The new masterplan will provide a new home for Cavendish to meet existing needs.
- The new masterplan will support commercial entrepreneurship which will support a growth in jobs.
- Different sizes and types of spaces will be provided to facilitate new growth.

9) *Will new facilities be available to all residents in the City?*

- The site will be fully publically accessible.
- The sports centre already provides public access. This was secured to mitigate the impact of the NWCD.

10) *The site will have large areas of flat roofspace. Will this be used creatively?*

- A site wide Sustainability Framework is being developed.
- BREEAM excellent will be targeted.
- The flat roofspace offers opportunities for solar PV and/or green and brown roofs.
- Plant load is quite high for these types of uses so this needs to be carefully considered.

11) *The City is characterised by squares and courtyards. This does not seem to be reflected in the indicative masterplan.*

- Squares and courtyards are very different environments to the academic and commercial campus at West Cambridge.
- Buildings will address the public realm which is very different to an enclosed college layout.

12) *North/south pedestrian connectivity is paramount. How will strategy reduce reliance on the private car?*

- A reduction in car trips will be achieved through site wide travel planning.
- Some car parking will still be provided through well scaled multi storey car parks on the site perimeters.
- This means all site users arriving by car become a pedestrian from the multi storey car park to their place of work.

13) *Will the Cavendish Gardens be lost in the redevelopment?*

- The open space to the south west of Cavendish will be enhanced and made publically accessible.

14) *Building heights need to be carefully considered.*

- Generally, the indicative masterplan will not provide buildings greater than 3 -4 commercial storeys, which reflects the existing site.
- A good solar environment will be provided to adjacent open spaces.
- Heights are relatively low compared to City centre campuses, but buildings have larger footprints.
- The density is approximately one third of the New Museums site in central Cambridge. The New Museums site is similar to central London in density.
- The landscape impact assessment is currently being assessed with officers.

15) *How will the proposals be integrated with City Deal transport improvements?*

- The masterplan outline application is independent of City Deal.
- Emerging City Deal proposals are not within the University's control.
- Transport testing is independent of City Deal, but implications of transport upgrades will be considered in this context.

Summary

The developer team was thanked for a comprehensive presentation. Members agreed a follow up briefing on transport matters would be beneficial when the results of the transport modelling are available.

The application is expected to be brought before Committee in the summer 2016.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am

CHAIR