

JOINT LOCAL PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP

30 November 2021
5.40 - 7.14 pm

Present: Councillors Bick, S. Smith, Thornburrow, Hawkins, Van de Weyer, R.Williams and Shailer

Officers Present:

Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development: Stephen Kelly
Strategy and Economy Manager: Caroline Hunt
Principal Planning Policy Officer: Terry de Sousa
Strategic Planning Consultant: Matthew Paterson
Committee Manager: Sarah Steed

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

19/5JLPAG Apologies

No apologies were received.

19/6JLPAG Appointment of Vice Chair

The appointment of the Vice-Chair was deferred to a future meeting.

19/7JLPAG Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

19/8JLPAG Minutes

The approval of the minutes of the 8 September 2021 meeting was deferred to a future meeting.

19/9JLPAG North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19)

The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development introduced the Officer's presentation which outlined the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP): Proposed Submission (Regulation 19).

The Planning Policy Team's presentation could be found via the meeting webpage:

[Agenda for Joint Local Planning Advisory Group on Tuesday, 30th November, 2021, 5.30 pm - Cambridge Council.](#)

The Joint Local Planning Advisory Group (JLPAG) was invited to consider and comment on the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP): Proposed Submission document and its Policies Map (Appendix A1 and A2), including the changes proposed to it in response to the consultation comments received on the draft Area Action Plan held in 2020 which were set out in the Consultation Statement (Appendix D), having regard to the supporting documents (see Appendices B,C, and E to H) and evidence base (see Appendix I and the Background documents to this report). The Advisory Group's comments would be reported to Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's respective decision-making committees in January 2022.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Queried whether the aspiration to achieve net zero carbon should be 2050 or earlier. Liked the informal and children's play space provision. Asked for further information about concerns which had been raised during the consultation regarding building heights. Saw the benefits of increasing building heights. Asked what the benefits were of bringing building heights down. Noted the value of building higher as more units could be built which would be closer to open spaces and other community facilities.
- ii. Felt the City Council's and South Cambridgeshire District Council's land ownership within the NECAAP site area should be clearer and more transparent in the Context Section of the Area Action Plan. The City Council had two interests in the site one as a landowner and one with development interest.
- iii. Noted and supported that the policy target for informal open space and children's play space would now be met however was disappointed that this was through long corridors of open space and asked how wide they were and whether they were useable as it was not clear from the figures with the Area Action Plan. Asked for further explanation why the informal open space was proposed in that way as some consultation representations noted support for a centralised informal open space. Supported the dispersed approach to children's play spaces. Expressed concerns that less than 8.5% of the formal open space would be provided on site and wanted more than this provided in line with the

Local Plan policy. Felt the policy should not rely on a reduction of amount of formal open space required based on potentially providing better quality, all year round facilities given that people will want to use these facilities at the same time and that there is a shortage in provision already in North Cambridge. The AAP should therefore also require that a proportion, such as 50% or more, should be provided off-site to an equivalent area as required by the policy to ensure no reduction in the overall land provided as formal open space.

- iv. The indoor recreation sounded good but was disappointed that not enough developer contributions would be required to provide a swimming pool on site. Noted that people could go to west Cambridge for sports provision but felt it would have been nice to have had facilities in the north of Cambridge.
- v. Noted that there could be innovation regarding allotments for example these could be located on roofs or in communal gardens. Noted that the policy requirement for allotments was about 8 hectares (Officers advised post meeting that the policy requirement for allotments was 6.5 hectares). Was not clear whether the allotment requirement would be provided on site. Would the innovative roof allotments be additional to or part of the 8 hectare requirement and innovation shouldn't reduce provision. Felt there should be parcels of land dedicated for allotments throughout the site and this should be set out in the policy as per the informal and children's play space requirement..
- vi. Asked what the consequence would be if members wanted to double the provision of formal outdoor open space within the NECAAP area, for example from 8.5% to 17%, which was still below 20% open space provision. Expressed concern that other development which may come forward in Cambridge may not provide policy compliant open space provision relying on the fact that it was not provided within the NECAAP area.
- vii. Noted there were no large public swimming pools in South Cambridgeshire, so there was a lot of un-met demand, which tended to move to the city and Royston. Asked if this had been taken into consideration as part of the NECAAP work.
- viii. Stated that they had received a letter from the management of Milton Country Park (Cambridge Lake Trust) expressing concern about the detrimental impact of NEC on Milton Country Park. Members had raised similar concerns about the informal open space being proposed as large strips and that people may look to Milton Country Park for one large area of open space.

- ix. Referred to North East Cambridge Policy 4a which set a target of 80 litres per person per day. Felt this was a good but highly ambitious target. Asked if there were other examples of developments where that level of water efficiency had been achieved.
- x. Referred to Document H2 and commented that the document suggested that until the Regional Water Management Plan had been completed there was uncertainty about whether water could be supplied to meet the early phases of the development.
- xi. Asked if the types of employment space planned were matched to the employment evidence which underpinned the emerging Local Plan and the sectors that were expected to grow.
- xii. Hoped new jobs would go to new community and cultural space provided in the NEC AAP area. Noted that Eddington was designed to Code 5 for Sustainable Homes which included water efficiency and thought residents were restricted to 80 litres per person per day and thought this was working well and there were other examples in Europe. Thought Cambridge University had made a commitment to provide a swimming in West Cambridge and was being funded through the West Cambridge and Eddington developments. Asked for further information as they did not want the swimming pool to be delayed to wait for NEC contributions.
- xiii. Thanked the Planning Policy Team for their hard work. Noted there was still work to be done and noted that further issues may be raised when the NEC AAP was taken through the separate decision making meetings at the City Council and South Cambs District Council.

The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, Strategy and Economy Manager, Principal Planning Policy Officer and Strategic Planning Consultant said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Noted the local community had expressed concerns regarding the proposed building heights and densities in the consultation version of the plan. Whilst concerns expressed during the consultation were important, officers also needed to rely on evidence. Concerns about buildings heights was due to the feeling that tall buildings were not of Cambridge character. Putting increased building heights on the edge of the city would impact the setting of the city, the landscape and the conservation and heritage assets on the edge of the city. Officers had engaged with Historic England who also had concerns about the original proposed building heights. A Heritage Impact Assessment had been undertaken which helped to inform the latest proposals. Concerns had also been raised during the consultation about how building heights and densities were balanced with open space provision. At draft Plan stage the

proposed building heights were higher and less open space provision was proposed, residents' expressed concerns regarding an imbalance of provision. Changes to the NEC AAP were proposed in the Proposed Submission plan which officers felt reflected the latest evidence as well as addressed concerns raised at the consultation stage.

- ii. In both the Local Plan and Area Action Plan there was an aim and ambition to move towards net zero carbon by 2050. It was not possible to commit to an earlier date at this moment in time. The whole ethos around the NECAAP and Local Plan was about moving towards net zero carbon as soon as it could be achieved.
- iii. Noted that Holland had a similar topography to Cambridgeshire (ie: flat) and tended to build its higher buildings on the edge of cities. Officers proposed a pyramid approach in NECAAP site itself. There would be tall buildings in the centre and then in more sensitive areas for example on the edges, the site heights stepped down to take into consideration more sensitive uses and locations outside the of the AAP area.
- iv. Noted that land ownership details for the NECAAP area were included within figure 2.5 of the NECAAP document. The document had been included to show the varied land ownerships across the site highlighting the need for an Area Action Plan to coordinate development across the site. The City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council both owned land across the site but this tended to be smaller plots compared with the larger landowners for example Trinity College. Officers agreed to keep figure 2.5 under review.
- v. One of the reasons that there was not one large central area of open space was to retain good internal connectivity across the site. There were several existing features within the site which restricted open space location for example the first public drain. Officers wanted to make sure that the proposed park connected into the first public drain, this was why it had a linear feature. Wanted the district centre to be in the right location and to be well positioned in relation to the primary street, local bus routes and the guided bus way. This would need to be relocated if there was one large green central open space area. Another consideration was to ensure that open space areas were accessible and effectively on the doorsteps of residents. This might not be possible if there was only one large central area of open space, as some residents might have to travel some time to be able to access the open space. The proposed size of the central area of open space was equivalent to Christ's Pieces. The linear areas of open space were large (up to 100m wide) and would be functional areas of open space.

- vi. There was a policy requirement of 0.1 hectare per thousand people for formal sports provision. Any development which came forward would need to comply with this requirement. Due to the high-density nature of the area and the multi-use ways that consideration was given to sports facilities, effort should be focussed on multi-use game areas. There could be innovation with sports facilities for example they could be located on building roofs. This would be a matter for landowners and developers to consider and bring forward.
- vii. Whether existing spaces outside the AAP could be used more intensively came down to good management and maintenance of the facilities to meet the needs of new and existing communities.
- viii. The Open Space and Recreation Topic Paper outlined how much NEC would generate in terms of a swimming pool. The NEC would generate 0.78 of a 4 lane swimming pool based on Sport England standards. The Local Plan standard was 1 swimming pool per 50,000 residents. NEC was expected to have 16,500 residents based on population forecast data supporting the plan, therefore this did not generate the need for a new swimming pool. However the Topic Paper stated that off-site contributions should be sought to deliver a swimming pool at West Cambridge. The Topic Paper looked at the walking and cycling catchment of existing facilities in and around north east Cambridge. NEC was within a 15 minute bike ride of Parkside Pool and 10-15 minute cycle ride from Abbey Pool. If the swimming pool at west Cambridge came forward then residents at NEC would have 3 swimming pools within a 15 minute cycle ride area.
- ix. NECAAP would generate about 6.5 hectares of allotment provision. Officers were not designing the development parcels and were just providing the spatial and policy framework. It was expected that allotment provision would be provided on-site, developer contributions would be required if allotments were not able to be provided on site. On-site provision could be provided in an innovative way.
- x. If members wanted to increase the amount of formal open space provided on-site there would need to be a trade off with another planning use. Officers had sought to achieve a balance between all the different competing uses on site. Officers had sought to maintain the same number of homes as those proposed in the draft AAP to the current AAP whilst reducing the number of proposed jobs given the aim to provide a mix-use self-sustaining district. The Playing Pitch Strategy would be updated as part of the Local Plan work which would look at associated outdoor facilities. The Strategy would assess provision in the Greater Cambridge area and look at deficiencies in provision as well as current

trends and population growth. Development Plan documents had to be reviewed every 5 years, this would take into account changes in circumstances and new evidence. Consultation responses suggested people wanted this area to be a living place and therefore the emphasis on informal open space was more important than formal open space as residents could use the amenities provided within the city.

- xi. The Science Park and the Innovation Park were low in density employment in some areas and the Plan sought to intensify the floorspace. This would align with the economic forecast set out in the Employment Land Review Paper. Officers had sought to re-provide the full amount of existing industrial floorspace as this was equally important to protect the local economy. Had also sought to ensure a mixture of floorspace between the industrial and high-tech business and office floorspace.
- xii. The water efficiency target of 80 litres per person per day was possible and was being delivered at development sites in London. The developments had low water fosses and low shower fosses which worked well. 80 litres per person per day was also included in the Preferred Options for the Local Plan supported by evidence commissioned to support the Local Plan.
- xiii. In terms of the water supply issue, the current evidence did not provide a full answer that there would be sufficient water supply in place to deliver the Local Plan Preferred Options. It was hoped that the Water Resources East work and their Water Management Plan due next year, would provide the answer. It wasn't just about a new reservoir in the Fens. Officers had been working with Water Companies who had highlighted other options available for example a bulk water transfer. There were sufficient grounds to be positive that development could be started in the Plan period. If circumstances suggested a reversal of the position, officers would advise members.
- xiv. The letter from Sports Lakes Trust (Milton Country Park), Cambridge Past Present and Future and the Wildlife Trust expressed concern around the provision of wider open space and whether the impact of use from people living in NEC could adversely impact Milton Country Park, which was already well used. The proposals for NEC needed to be considered in the wider context. Whilst the AAP looked at NEC itself, consideration had to be given to the Local Plan work which was being done which looked at a wider green infrastructure network for the Greater Cambridge area which included a number of different proposals mentioned in the officer presentation. Good connectivity was expected to come to the north. There was an existing foot and cycle bridge and an

existing underpass which was proposed to be enhanced and a new underpass was proposed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership near the railway. A new foot and cycle bridge over the railway was proposed in the AAP to the East, which would provide connectivity to the River Cam corridor. Open Space would be provided within the site but the connections into the wider countryside may mean some residents would use Milton Country Park and some would use other opportunities coming forward, whilst some existing residents that currently used Milton Country Park may use other new provision.

- xv. The Open Space Topic Paper outlined that new swimming pools were due to be brought forward with developments in Cambourne, Northstowe and Waterbeach. When these developments came forward it was hoped that demand for pools within Cambridge from South Cambs residents should fall. The demand for swimming pools would be understood more once the Swimming Pool Delivery Strategy had been undertaken as part of the Local Plan.
- xvi. Officers would investigate the issues raised regarding the West Cambridge swimming pool as this did not fall within the NEC AAP.

The meeting ended at 7.14 pm

CHAIR