APPENDIX F: CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY PANEL REPORT

CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY PANEL

REPORT OF PANEL MEETING

Scheme: Cambridge Science Park Station and Interchange

Date: 17th June 2013

Venue: Shire Hall Room 128, Shire Hall, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge

Time: 12:30-16:30 (includes site visit)

Quality Panel Members

Robin Nicholson (Chair)
David Prichard
Canda Smith
George Hazel
Lynne Sullivan
Simon Carne

Panel secretariat and support

Juliet Richardson (Cambridgeshire County Council)
Antony Proietti (Cambridgeshire County Council)
Judit Carballo (Cambridgeshire County Council)

Local Authority Attendees

Tim Watkins (Development Management Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council)
David Atkinson (County Planning, Minerals and Waste Business Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council)
John Pym (Senior Planning Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council)
Bonnie Kwok (Senior Urban Designer, South Cambridgeshire District Council)
Mike Salter (Transport Assessment Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council)
Sophie Pain (Senior Planning Officer, Cambridge City Council)
Glen Richardson (Head of Urban Design, Cambridge City Council)
Ian Dyer (Lead Engineer Cambridgeshire County Council)

Applicant and Representatives

Chris Poultney (Team Leader-Public Transport Projects, Cambridgeshire County Council)
Stan Doyle (Director, Atkins Global)
Quintin Doyle (Lead Architectural Designer, Atkins Global)
Duncan Whatmore (Urban Designer, Duncan Whatmore Urban Design & Architecture)

1. Scheme description and presentation

Architect/Designer	Atkins Global
Developer	Cambridgeshire County Council
Planning status	Pre-determination

2. Overview

The Cambridge Science Park Station and Interchange application proposes a new railway station, and an interchange facility providing access onto the wider public transport network (bus, cycle and pedestrian links).

The proposed new railway station development will include a station building with passenger waiting facilities, toilets, a ticket office, retail floor space and amenity space. The development will also include two main line platforms and a bay platform with a footbridge (with lift) providing access over the main lines and operational sidings from the station building to the platforms. Other aspects to the development include car parking (approximately 450 spaces) and cycle parking, hard and soft landscaping and vehicular access from Cowley Road.

The development seeks to create an interchange facility providing access onto the wider public transport network. Chesterton Interchange will enable travellers to switch between all modes with access for pedestrians and cyclists, bus users, car drivers and passengers, and heavy rail users. The interchange will be linked into the existing guided 'Busway' network by a short length of new bus route to implement a longer section of busway, which has planning permission, but not yet built. As confirmed by Mark Prisk, Minister for Housing, the Government recognises the important role the creation of the new Cambridge Science Park Station will play in serving the development of Northstowe.

The site covers approximately 13 hectares and it is located within the ward of Milton. To the north of the proposed site lies industrial development on Cowley Road; former railway engineering depot sidings, an operational aggregates rail terminal and Cambridge Sewage Works. To the east of the site is the main West

Anglia main railway, and beyond the railway line gypsy and travellers' sites and land in industrial uses off Fen Road. To the west of the site is the St Johns Business Park and to the south of the site are the Nuffield Road allotments / Bramblefields Local Nature Reserve and wider residential area of East Chesterton.

An Area Action Plan (APP) is currently being prepared, which will consider holistically the longer term development proposals for the Station and wider, surrounding area. South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council will be consulting on the AAP during the summer.

3. Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views

Introduction

The Panel were pleased to see the scheme at the pre-determination stage and welcomed the intention for the proposals to form part of a wider development area. The Panel considered this to be both an exciting and important scheme which had huge potential in terms of transport but also wider implications in terms of setting a high standard for the regeneration of this part of the city.

The Panel's advice reflects the issues associated with each of the four 'C's' in the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter.

Community

The Panels comments on the community aspects of the scheme principally covered the site in relation to the wider area. The Panel noted that given the links to the main business centres to the north of the City the area has the potential to expand from being just a station to containing facilities for the wider community. The Panel therefore questioned whether the station was of the right size with the right level of facilities, and planned opportunities for expansion.

Given the importance of the wider context the Panel welcomed that an Area Action Plan (AAP) was being developed for the wider area and that this process

was being led by the local authorities, working collaboratively together to develop a shared vision.

The Panel considered that the AAP needs to envisage and anticipate how the site and wider area may evolve and highlight the tensions that may arise (e.g. the likely increase in land value to the east of the railway line). Currently there is a large number of Gypsy and Travellers' pitches located the east of the proposed railway station. Concerns over amenity issues such as the impact of noise and visual amenity on the nearby Gypsy and Traveller community were raised by SCDC officers at the meeting. Given the significant implications and pressures on the land to the east of the railway line, the Panel considered that this area should be included in any development proposals and assessment.

The Panel acknowledged the problems that smells from the sewage treatment works could cause to the site and looked forward to the modernisation of the facility.

Connectivity

The Panel welcomed the proximity of the station to a number of key business areas in Cambridge, such as the Science Park, Business Park and St Johns Innovation Centre; and residential neighbourhoods such us Fen Ditton and Chesterton. Proximity to these areas gives a good opportunity for the site to maximise access to the station by sustainable modes of transport. The Panel also welcomed the potential for future railway connections with London, Ely, King's Ling and Birmingham.

However, the Panel considered that not enough work had been undertaken on where people were coming from and the links into the site, particularly from key areas such as the Science Park and from the south west of the site. They questioned whether this work has been done and if so how it can be best represented.

The Panel had concerns regarding the circulation of users and access across the site. For example:

- Bus stop – clarity required as to whether cyclists and buses were coming down the same road;
- Potential conflict between cyclists coming from the north and pedestrians using the 'square';
- Taxis and private cars – are they going to use the same drop-off point? If so need to make sure that enough space is provided to allow the traffic to move smoothly.
- Are there any plans to slow down specific users, using the landscape, when they are arriving at the train station?
- Concerns were raised over the lack of escalators in this large-scale railway station, as the proposals only include lifts, and how this could impact on accessibility within the station building and the platforms.

The Panel recommended that analysis is carried out, as part of the application, to provide details of; where people are coming from (and how), how they move around the site and the areas of potential conflict are minimised, and how these elements may change over time.

The Panel queried the nature of the bike storage and how it was going to be delivered. In particular the Panel questioned whether the bike sheds would incorporate double-stacking bike storage.

Character

The Panel highlighted the significance of the scheme as a 'gateway' to Cambridge. For a number of people this will be their first impression of Cambridge and this part of the city. As such the character of the area is of great importance. However, the Panel considered that currently the scheme has not captured the magic of arriving in Cambridge. There needs to be more work undertaken on this aspect and a greater reference in the design to the local Cambridge and Science Park context reflected in the scheme (in terms of architecture and landscape).

The Panel liked a number of elements of the scheme design (including PVs on roof of cycle shed, links to history through the Game of Life proposals), but needed to know more regarding the evolution of the design process and what has shaped the design of the building.

The Panel noted that there was very little information provided on the inside of the building and challenged whether the experience/journey from departing a train to arriving outside the station building could be explained. This simple journey through the building needs to be celebrated.

The Panel acknowledged the functionality of the building design but considered the architecture to be quite stiff and uninspiring. The design work needs to reflect that the new station belongs to the 21st century. In particular the Panel considered that the site and building should be built to last and be able to evolve in the future. Considerations of future expansion are essential (e.g. leave room for future inclusion of an escalator rather than just lifts and stairs) and the Panel thought that the nature of the building design as it is could be problematic when designing future capacity.

The quality of the architecture helps define the space. The Panel considered that the outside areas need more enclosure as places are usually defined by their edges.

The design of the landscape elements of the site are critical and it is important that the landscape character matches the architecture in terms of it being logical, robust and maintainable. However, the Panel considered that the current geometry was wrong and that there were areas of land which will become eroded away due to people's desire lines. The Panel recommended that the landscape proposals were simplified in order to provide an improved design.

The Panel suggested that fun elements needed to be added to the proposals to make it a pleasurable experience. These could be small elements (e.g. levers at Boston station were used as an example) which add a sense of fun to the experience and at a low cost. In particular the Panel were interested in regards to what could be accommodated within the space at the front of the building which can help transform it into a 'place' e.g. innovative use of ticketing at the front of the building or replication of Game of Life design on pavement. There is

opportunity for hi-tech elements given the link to the neighbouring Science Park. These elements, which have the potential to be incorporated into art projects for the scheme, need to be investigated further.

Other comments that the Panel had on the character aspects of the scheme are as follows:

- Too much emphasis on the stair views, which needs to be illustrated;
- The proposed bridge between platforms should be more than just a link and the architecture (and structure) of this element of the scheme needs to be improved e.g. because this element terminates a vista;
- Question whether public toilets are located before entering the platforms?
- Is there protection/enclosure provided from those moving from the building to the bus stops?
- The Panel welcomed the incorporation of the 'Game of Life. However, need to ensure that it is made to work for the scheme rather than being controlled by it.
- How is the name of the scheme (Cambridge Science Park Station) reflected and represented? Links to signage/logo. How does this relate to the Science Park image?
- Less concern by 3-storey size of building or the impact on the land to the east.

Climate

The Panel highlighted the importance of long life design and questioned whether the Station was self-sufficient in terms of energy use, and if not why? The Panel suggested that a clear, visual reminder of energy consumption would help focus attention as to how much energy was being used, which could be innovatively presented with possible links to public art proposals on site.

The Panel commented on the use of swales, which as well as providing sustainability benefits can also help provide landscape character.

4. Conclusion

The Panel acknowledged that this is a fantastic and intriguing project which is a huge opportunity to develop something important, that can be one of the Cambridge landmarks and gateway into the city. But it needs to be excellent to achieve this.

However, the Panel noted that the current designs do not yet show this. The design needs to improve to elevate the scheme about a normal train station, with the Panel believing that it would not be too onerous to make improvements to the design quality that would quite dramatically alter and improve the development.

The key issues raised by the Panel are highlighted below (these replicate the comments made in the main body of the report, further details of which can be found above):

- The station area needs to retain the ability to expand in the future and provide a range of community facilities;
- Good location in relation to key business and residential areas. However, further work required on links to the site, where people are coming from, and how this may change in the future;
- Concerns regarding circulation of users and access within the site; there are a number of areas of potential conflict. Further analysis required on this aspect;
- Greater reference and connection to local Cambridge and Science Park context within design of the scheme;
- More information required on design process;
- More information required on internal building design and the 'journeys' of those using the facility, demonstrating how the station design, e.g. through architectural language, built form, materials, etc., would help create a memorable experience for visitors;
- Design of building needs to improve (currently quite stiff and uninspiring) and reflect status as new station belonging to the 21st century;

- Station building needs to be built to last and be able to evolve and expand in the future (e.g. include enough space to introduce escalators if needed in the future);
- Outside areas need more sense of enclosure (places often being defined by their edges);
- Landscape design needs to be re-considered and simplified (designed around desire lines);
- Include 'fun' elements and make it a pleasurable experience (opportunity to link with hi-tech nature Science Park/incorporate as part of public art proposals). In particular, opportunity to use space in front of the buildings;
- Importance of long life design and self-sufficiency – visual reminder of energy use;
- Use of swales – no details. Important both in terms of sustainability and providing landscape character.

The Panel appreciated that a number of these elements may have already been undertaken; however, the presentation didn't fully cover all the aspects of the scheme.

The Panel considered that the importance of the scheme demands that the changes highlighted above are made and further work is undertaken.

The Panel noted that although this review was for the Station scheme it had a wider context and forms a larger area of development. The long term future implications need to be considered now to avoid creating any tensions and issues, which in the future become showstoppers. The Local Authorities need to be taking the lead in the long-term planning proposals for the wider area.

The Panel therefore welcomed the news that an AAP was going to be developed for the wider area and that Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working in partnership to develop this document. However, notwithstanding the concerns raised by the LPA regarding the existing use of land as gypsy and traveller sites (one of area's most significantly deprived

populations), the Panel suggested that the land to the east side of the railway line is included within any plans.

The Panel considered that the AAP needs to envisage and anticipate how the site and wider area may evolve and the tensions that may arise (e.g. with land to the east of the railway line). In the wider context the AAP will provide more direction of what type of place we would like to live in. Given the potential pressure on land to the east of the railway, now is the time to be considering the issues in regards to the wider area.

The Panel recognised that the area is going to be very popular once the Station is built, and the properties and surrounding land will increase in value. The Panel questioned whether there is any opportunity to capture this value to help fund further improvements to the area (e.g. relocation of sewage treatment works).

The Panel would welcome seeing the plans again, at a later stage, as part of the iterative design process. Ongoing Panel input is important and will help to refine and develop the proposals. The Panel would also encourage being consulted on the draft AAP for the area, in order to help ensure that the quality for the wider area is embedded as early as possible.