



Disability Consultative Panel

Tuesday, 25 July 2023

14:00 – 16:30

Venue

**Swansley A&B, Ground floor, South Cambridgeshire Hall,
South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambourne
and via Microsoft 'Teams'**

Notes

Attendees

Mark Taylor	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Chair)
Rosalind Bird	MS Society/Architect (retired)
Sue Simms	Former Housing Officer
Jean White	Retired City Council employee
John Taylor	Resident
Katie Roberts	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Notes)
Kate Poyser	Principal Planner, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (for presentation 1)
Aaron Coe	Principal Planner (CIP and SCIP Projects) (for presentation 2)

Apologies

Betty Watts, Jane Renfrew, David Baxter, John Taylor

Presentation 1: Land adjacent to Netherhall Farm, Cambridge (PA/23/00004)

Presenters

Simon Hoskin, Cala Homes
Justin Bainton, Carter Jonas
Joshua Cherry, jtp

The presenters delivered a detailed presentation about the wider context, local connections and location of the site (situated to the south-east of Cambridge, along Worts' Causeway). It was noted that the site benefits from outline planning permission with all matters reserved except for access for up to 200 residential homes and an approach is being made towards a detailed application in the coming months. Details were also provided about the planning context, design proposal (connectivity, green infrastructure, current layout, landscape, parking strategy, accommodation schedule, building heights and typical house types). It was highlighted that the homes and tenures in this scheme have been designed for M4(2) compliance as a minimum and a checklist was included to demonstrate how the accessible requirements of the M4(3) homes are met.

A description was provided of the footpaths, cycle routes and open spaces, which allow biodiversity to flourish, as well as the parking strategy, which provides for a blended solution across the site, and the various play areas.

Panel comments and queries

- In response to a query by the Chair, it was confirmed that the only road to be adopted is the main loop road; the preference of the Highways Authority is for everything else to be unadopted. All of the unadopted roads and communal spaces will be handed over to a Management company, who will have responsibility for their maintenance. Following a further query from the Chair, Simon Hoskin mentioned that he would check on the funding arrangements; typically Cala would remain involved for a number of years following completion and then it would become the responsibility of the residents living on the development to continue to look after the site. The Chair commented on his knowledge that some sites, where roads have not been adopted, have fallen into disrepair because of an unwillingness to fund what is needed. Sue Simms also received confirmation that the residents (and subsequent residents in the future) would be made aware at the outset in the sale documents that they would have responsibility for looking after the communal areas, etc.
- In response to a query by the Chair, it was confirmed that it is a City Council application and that there will be 200 homes in total (a combination of houses and apartments). All the apartment buildings will be equipped with lifts.
- Sue Simms commented that it would be helpful if the M4 (3) properties have bathroom doors that slide (pocket doors) rather than opening doors, because they get in the way of the wheelchair. She added that it would be advantageous to ensure when the properties are being built that a level access wet room shower can be accommodated, if necessary, at a later stage.
- It was confirmed that there would be parking space for delivery vans
- After commenting on the footpaths and roadways, Rosalind Bird queried if it is only possible to access the site (either as a pedestrian or in a vehicle) on the southern boundary. It was confirmed that this understanding is correct; although the issue has been examined in some detail, it is reliant upon third party land and two landowners are not willing to cooperate.
- The Chair sought confirmation that some form of strategy would be in place regarding the evacuation of residents from the upper floors of the apartment blocks in the event of a fire
- In response to a query by the Chair, it was confirmed that, in terms of the housing split, there will be 75% affordable rented and 25% shared ownership

Presentation 2: East Barnwell Regeneration

Presenters

Jennifer McIntosh, bptw
Paul Belton, Carter Jonas
Molly Savino, Cambridge City Council
Simone Marsberg, Hill

Asri Asra, bptw
Mark Bentley, The Environment Partnership, London

Jennifer McIntosh introduced the presentation by explaining her aim to begin with a brief overview of the location of the scheme in the east of the City before providing details about the proposals that have arisen from collaboration between public bodies, including the City Council, and the local community, and are focused on delivering high quality regeneration of the local area at the junction of Newmarket Road and Barnwell Road. The aim is so to encourage local people to take advantage of a re-developed local centre, amenities, high quality affordable housing, and improved pedestrian and cycle links, instead of travelling into central Cambridge.

Jennifer explained that, in the current site layout, the ground floor layout includes proposals for community spaces, commercial units, accommodation, car parking spaces and dedicated cycle stores. In terms of the landscape strategy, Mark Bentley, the Landscape Architect, described the proposals to seek to create a vibrant local centre with high quality open space, extensive planting and tree lined streets. The paving and boundary treatments were also highlighted. Jennifer McIntosh continued to focus on the parking and cycling strategy and the landscape detailing (layout, paving, furniture and equipment), supporting accessibility for all, and concluded by discussing the range of homes; all the homes will be affordable and accessible with a mix of housing types and sizes to support local housing need.

Panel comments and queries

- Sue Simms queried what is going to happen to various amenities, including the Church, the bowling green and the tennis courts. The presenters commented that they have not considered the proposals for the Church yet, but that the bowling green is being relocated to the Abbey Leisure Car Park area and the tennis courts are being improved. In response to a further query by Sue about the underpass (which floods), the presenters mentioned that it is not included in their proposals as it is a little further south. However, they added that they are looking at ways in which they might be able to improve the crossings at surface level across Barnwell Road, such as a toucan crossing, which would provide better access.
- Sue also asked if the residents who will have to leave will have the opportunity to move back into the area. It was revealed that all the tenants who are renting Council properties will have the right to return to the site. Site 1 will deliver quite a lot of residential homes and there may be the opportunity for people living on that site to move directly into a new home or elsewhere.
- In response to an additional query by the Chair about the existing businesses, Jennifer McIntosh commented that discussions were taking place with individual tenants and they are likely to be part of phase two.
- Sue Simms mentioned the preference of the Disability Panel that the units built for accessible use are equipped with sliding doors, or doors that open outwards
- The Chair mentioned that, because fewer and fewer people can read Braille these days, tactile signage is preferred so that numbering and lettering can be felt.
- As a wheelchair user, Rosalind Bird commented favourably on the fact that there will not be any steps around the site
- In responses to a query by Jean White about block paving, the presenters explained the rationale for using permeable paving and block paving.
- The Chair expressed his disappointment with the scheme, particularly because it is a City Council project. He noted that there are 3 or 4 M4 (3) homes, whereas it should be at least 7 based on a calculation of 5% of 130 homes. Paul Belton explained that the calculation was based on the policy requirement for 5% of affordable housing (40%), although 100% affordable housing is being provided. However, he offered to discuss the argument with his housing colleagues. The Chair expressed his surprise that underground parking, which is of great benefit to disabled people, has not been proposed for the multi-storey block of flats, and also that negotiations have not taken place with the Church at this stage; in his knowledge, in many community developments Churches have chosen to benefit from a new build and their facilities have been incorporated with the community facilities. Paul Belton replied that it is very difficult in prime locations to provide such expensive parking regimes these days, but he acknowledged the Chair's point of view. The Chair added that the community centre does not include plans for changing places toilets.

He also mentioned that outside car parking is more difficult for people with mobility scooters, commenting that the bicycle storage should include room for scooter parking and scooter charging. In terms of the 2 disabled car parking spaces, they would necessitate parking parallel to the curb, which can be a difficult exercise getting out into the roadway for the driver or the passenger.

Presentation 3: Shopmobility (confidential)

Presenters

John O'Shea, Grafton Centre

Sean Cleary, Cambridge City Council

John O'Shea and Sean Cleary explained that the Shopmobility unit will need to relocate because of a proposed redevelopment of the Grafton Centre in Cambridge, subject to planning permission. With the aim of making the new location as accessible as possible to users, the suggestion is to create a prime retail unit with a shop window on Fitzroy Street, 20 metres from the Grafton Centre. It was mentioned that Mark Taylor has navigated the journey in his wheelchair from the car park at the Grafton Centre to enable John O'Shea and Sean Cleary to understand the relevant challenges and to be able to mitigate any associated risks. It was emphasised that these proposals are confidential because of the current tenants of the relevant retail units. The unit will be big enough for all wheelchair storage, it will be close to the parking and it will be easily visible. Confirmation was provided that the current office would not shut until the new unit has opened. The Panel unanimously supported the proposals.

The next Disability Panels will take place on **5 September and 3 October**.