



Disability Consultative Panel

Tuesday, 31 October 2023

14:00 – 16:00

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)
Sue Simms	Former Housing Officer
Katie Roberts	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (Notes)
Jean White	Retired City Council employee
Betty Watts	Cambridge Deaf Association
John Taylor	Resident
Cuma Ahmet	Principal Planning Officer, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (for presentation 1)

Apologies

Jane Renfrew, David Baxter, Rosalind Bird

Presentation 1: Beehive Centre

Presenters

Jennie Hainsworth - Bidwells Planning
Mike Kingshott – Ridgelif
Lewis Kirk – LDA architects
Juliana Rojas – LDA landscape architect
Dave Martin – Waterman Group

The aim of the proposals, by redeveloping the site, is to create a business district for technology and life science sectors. The envisaged Beehive Development will provide a new local centre on the edge of the city with office/laboratory/research and development floorspace on the upper floors and the ground floor devoted to shops, cafes, restaurants, services and leisure facilities.

The applicants described the vision for a welcoming place for all, that is well connected and is a place of opportunity. They highlighted the accessibility of the site, including step-free access, cycle access and public transport, mentioning that the arrangement of routes and facilities for transport has been designed to support a shift away from private car use towards more sustainable transport modes.

Although the project will result in a significant reduction to the car park, accessible car parking will be provided in excess of Local Plan and British standard requirements, with up to 75 car parking spaces (43 spaces located within the multi-storey car park at ground level or close to suitable lifts and 32 spaces clearly signposted across the site). Accessible cycle parking has been informed by the relevant guidance. The presentation also focused on the accessibility of the layout of the site and the accessibility of the buildings, such as the Community pavilion, which will incorporate toilets for public use, including a Changing Places facility. The applicants presented a detailed Landscape Strategy, identifying a range of themed public spaces spread throughout the site, and mentioning that an underpinning aim of the design principles is to ensure the character of the site is welcoming and inclusive. Attention was drawn to the materiality, furniture (proposed backrests and armrests), lighting, wayfinding and inclusive design language.

Panel comments and queries

- In response to a query by JW about toilet provision on the high street, it was confirmed that there would be 2 unisex toilets and a changing places facility within the community pavilion, with the expectation that there would also be toilets in the future ground floor facilities.
- The Chair enquired when the site is due to be constructed and completed, all things being equal. In response he was informed that construction would start in 2026 at the earliest and the site would be completed in approximately 6 – 10 years. It was mentioned that a summary of benefits document had been submitted, which sets out when some of the facilities, such as open spaces, would be delivered.
- SS requested that the doors to the wheelchair accessible toilets open outwards and not inwards.
- In response to JT's query about the potential cinema on the site and the bus provision, it was clarified that the presentation indicates a temporary outdoor cinema, but there are no proposals for a permanent cinema. The Chair followed up JT's comment about bus provision, in response to which it was confirmed that the planning process has involved negotiation with Stagecoach and other stakeholders in order to explore up to 15 dedicated services in order to enhance sustainable travel.
- In response to a comment by the Chair about the current lack of cycle and pedestrian movement through the site, an explanation was provided, using the slides, about the proposed improvement of the provision to ensure the site will be accessible for both pedestrians and cyclists, as well as disability scooters and wheelchairs.
- In response to a query from SS, JR confirmed that the seating arrangements would enable wheelchair users to sit beside their family, mentioning that the circular seats can be broken up so that wheelchair users can sit between them.
- The Chair queried whether the site was safe at all times of the day and whether there was sufficient surveillance in the evening. In response it was confirmed that a lighting strategy has been compiled, that the key routes (especially the entrances) will be well lit and that security cameras will be in place. In addition, discussions have been taking place with Cam Skate, who are interested in using the site out of hours, which would lead to increased surveillance in the evening.
- The Chair commented on the trend for the units in large developments like this scheme to be occupied by national chain restaurants, leading to criticism that some areas of Cambridge are no longer home to any local independent restaurants, which struggle to afford the rent. He mentioned that some cities implement a strategy of offering deals to independent businesses and queried whether the Beehive Development would follow this example. MK confirmed that discussions have taken place with Indie Cambridge, with the aim of curating the space with as many independent retailers and restaurants as possible.
- JT queried whether, if the site would incorporate a residential area, children would be taken into account with the provision of a play area. The presenters mentioned that, although it is not expected that there will be residential use on the site, there will be crossover between the people who are expected to come to the site and the people outside of the site boundary because of the location within a residential zone.

As a result, there will be many opportunities for play and ways are also being sought to integrate some playful elements in order to engage children and adults to explore the site and learn about the habitats, planting, birds and eco-systems that can exist within the city.

The Chair concluded by thanking the applicants for their presentation.