

Councillors Present:

County Councillors Reynolds (Chair), Hughes, Kenney and White
City Councillors Durrant, Holland, Reid and Ward;
South Cambridgeshire District Councillors Heazell, Mason, Spink and Wright

Also Present:

City Council Officers: Sara Cass (Urban Extensions Project Manager); Brian Human (Head of Policy & Projects);
County Council Officers: Paul Cook (Head of Transport Policy and Strategy); Craig Drury (Principal Transport Officer); Natasha Deverson (Transport Officer)
South Cambridgeshire District Council Officers: Michael Monk (Planning Consultant working for South Cambridgeshire District Council)

And

Jemma Little and John Onslow (Cambridgeshire Horizons); Ari Ali, Peter Harries and Rebecca Jarvis (Atkins)

Apologies had been received from Caroline Hunt (Principal Planning Officer) South Cambridgeshire District Council

06/NWF/01 Election of Chair

County Councillor Reynolds was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

06/NWF/02 Apologies

None.

06/NWF/03 Declarations Of Interest

None.

06/NWF/04 Draft Terms of Reference

In response to a question from a member about how the timing of the planning application from David Wilson Homes (for the part of the development within the City) might affect the work of the Reference Group, the Head of Policy & Projects advised the Group to work on strategic issues so as to ensure that the City Council's planning authority was not prejudiced in any way.

Resolved that the Terms of Reference be amended to include Cambridgeshire Horizons in the membership of the Reference Group.

Agreed the Terms of Reference as amended.

06/NWF/05 Cambridge North West Transport Strategy

The consultants, Atkins, gave a presentation on the work to date on a transport strategy for the North West Fringe which promoted sustainable transport and integrated this major growth area into Cambridge City and its surrounding areas. They presented details of two options which they considered would promote a 15-20% shift away from use of the private car to other forms of transport.

Following the presentation, members raised the following which the officers and consultants answered (A):

1. When was the Transport Strategy likely to come into effect when dealing with planning applications?
A: When the Area Action Plan would come into effect, the Transport Strategy having been a key element informing the Action Plan.
2. A concern that there be joined up thinking in relation to developments already planned in the area such as the Arbury Camps in connection with cycle routes through King's Hedges.
A: A number of cycle routes linking the Science Park and the West Cambridge Site were being considered.
3. Local residents were under the impression there would be no access for private cars to the NIAB site via Histon Road. Were they mistaken?
A: There were assumptions that some residents in any new development would use cars and that there would need to be two points of access. For the NIAB site, one would be from Huntingdon Road and one from Histon Road.
A: Existing roads eg Brownlow Road, would not be used to access the NIAB site from Histon Road, nor would Windsor Road be used, but new access would be required on Histon Road.
4. Concern that the consultants were not looking at the widespread impact of these developments beyond the City boundary into South Cambridgeshire. When the Northstowe development was complete, there would be a massive increase in traffic volumes on the A14 and A428 with people using these to access national routes.
A: The County Council's Long Term Transport Strategy (LTTS) was key to this along with continuing to put pressure on national government for funds for further dualling of the A428.
5. Would the judicial review of the A14 decision delay these developments? A reminder to members that for the Northstowe development there was a condition that would cause delay if the A14 works were not done.
A: There would be no delay but the impact of the review would need to be assessed.
A: Despite objections, the Highways Agency had not changed the programme for A14 improvements.
6. Had the consultants considered any other options than the two presented and if so, why had these been rejected?
A: The aim was to achieve a 15-20% shift away from use of the private car to other forms of transport such as public transport or cycle. The consultants had thought that a third option would not achieve this and had rejected it for that reason.

Agreed that the consultants would email details of this third option to members for their information.

Action PC Atkins

7. If there was a general increase in private car traffic on Madingley Road, would that imply a corresponding need to increase bus priority measures on that road?
A: Agreed.
8. Was it correct that to reduce the use of Huntingdon Road by private cars, a Park & Ride site at Longstanton linked to the guided bus project would be built?
A: The idea would be that considerable numbers of people would be picked up at the various stops of the guided bus before reaching Huntingdon Road. Otherwise the LTTP would have problems coping with the capacity on this route.
9. The vital importance of recognising that the main radial roads were currently well above capacity and the Highways Agency predicted that this would remain the case even if the A14 were upgraded.
A: The strategy had to address bottlenecks and junctions were critical bottlenecks.
10. Cars from the A603 were using the Madingley Road Park & Ride site. Would it be possible to provide a Park & Ride Site on the A603?
A: Park and Ride sites depended on being located on roads which were wide enough to have bus priority lane and Barton Road was too narrow which was why a site had not been located on the A603.
11. The considerable congestion on the A1303 was caused both by traffic coming in and leaving the City. Was it true that a bus lane on Madingley Hill could not be constructed because the road could not be widened because of the American Cemetery?
A: Paul Cook agreed to find out the answer and let members know.
12. Important not to underestimate the task of getting people out of their cars on to other forms of transport.
13. How would the two options presented be evaluated so that the best option was chosen rather than the least worst? What measures would be used for evaluation and would CO₂ emissions feature?
A: The consultants would look at case studies from elsewhere in the country such as Poundbury in Dorset and examples in London. Poundbury had used many varied measures such as stringent parking provision, use of good reliable public transport, siting of schools near to the developments etc.
14. Good reliable public transport was the key outside the City as well as inside and that was not in place at present.

Action PC

The Chair reminded members that there would be an opportunity to follow up on these issues when the consultants presented the results of the modelling phase in a few months time.

06/NWF/06 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 23 June at 10am at the Guildhall.

The meeting closed at 3.10pm.

Chair