

Councillors Present:

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

Councillor Hipkin, City Councillor for Castle Ward

Also Present:

City Council Officers: Sara Cass (Urban Extensions Project Manager); David Roberts (Planning Policy Manager);
County Council Officers: Paul Cook (Head of Transport Policy and Strategy); Kathy Baldwin (Sustainable Communities Manager)
South Cambridgeshire District Council Officers: Michael Monk (Planning Consultant working for South Cambridgeshire District Council)

And

Jemma Little and Peter Studdert (Cambridgeshire Horizons)

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

06/NWF/16 Election of Chair

Cambridge City Councillor Reid was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

06/NWF/17 Apologies

Apologies had been received from County Councillor Hughes.

06/NWF/18 Declarations Of Interest

The following personal interests were declared:

Councillor Ward as his wife is a fellow of St Edmunds College.

Councillor Mason as a member of Histon Parish Council as well as a member for South Cambridgeshire District Council

06/NWF/19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

06/NWF/20 Cambridge North West Transport Strategy

The Consultants Atkins gave a presentation updating members on what had happened since the presentation at the meeting on 13 June 2006. They described the Transport Strategy developed as a result of modelling different scenarios. The planning objectives of the Strategy are:

- Promote sustainable travel within site and to surrounding areas (see Structure Plan P8/1, P8/3)
- Include measures required to facilitate implementation of the Joint Area Action Plan

- Provide comprehensive network of walk/cycle routes (see Structure Plan P8/6, P8/9)
- Provide a network of High Quality Public Transport services (see Structure Plan P8/6)
- Ensure an appropriate level of highway capacity
- Link to local and national highways networks
- Minimise the need to travel by car (see Structure Plan P8/1, P8/2)

Atkins' approach is to predict, promote and provide an approach to walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure and a demand management approach to travel by private car.

Three levels of model were used - the Highways Agency Model (strategic level), Local Models and Traffic modelling.

Atkins presented two options - Option A and Option B which were tested against three different base years - 2003, 2016 and 2025. Maps of the area were presented showing the different patterns of traffic queuing in the different base years. These results were also considered in the context of the general impact in the wider area. Atkins' conclusions about this more general impact were:

1. Traffic growth and other developments between 2003 and 2025 will lead to increased congestion at the following locations:
 - Milton Interchange
 - Histon interchange
 - M11 junction 12
 - Approach to M11 from A428.
2. Development of Cambridge North West site will not lead to a significant difference in queuing patterns across South Cambridgeshire compared to the 2025 Base situation; however queues on A428 on approach to M11 may be reduced.

The Preferred Highways Option proposed was:

- No M11 slip roads
- Sinuous Orbital Route for Car Traffic (modelling suggests non-development traffic would not use this route)
- Direct Orbital Route for Public Transport, Cycles and Pedestrians
- Radial Highway Route through University site

Key principles relating to walking, cycling, public transport and highways and suggested phasing of infrastructure were then presented.

The Transport Strategy will be considered alongside the Issues and Options for the Joint Area Action Plan during the public consultation period from 25 September - 6 November 2006.

After the presentation, members made the following points to which officers responded (A):

Several members raised issues in relation to the modelling techniques used:

1. The 2025 model showed massive queuing at the Histon Road interchange which is a five ways junction. Was the fact that motorists were having to reduce speed when entering the 30mph zone from the 40mph zone a contributory factor?

A: Difficult to say why the queues form where they do; the speed restriction change could be a factor. The models are looking at the relative differences between options. Important that between 2003 and 2025 there will be other developments already approved that will affect traffic flows.

2. These questions already sent to officers by email: Are the figures from the Highways Agency for the 2003 base up-to-date because figures they issued for the Histon interchange were estimates. And are these 2003 figures adjusted for the link north of the A14 junction?

A: Officers had replied to the email. This modelling work not significantly affected by the Guided Bus. The modal split has been tested both taking into account the presence of the Guided Bus and its absence. Similarly whether or not the Chesterton interchange is built will not have a significant impact. An assumption has been made that the cycle route from the Arbury Camp development would extend into this site. The officers agreed to let members know which figures had been used for the Highways Agency modelling.

3. Concern about a number of the assumptions made in the models - where the Guided Bus bus stops will be (not actually known yet), that the Chesterton Interchange will be built, there is still controversy about the cycle routes for the Arbury Camp development.
4. What assumptions have been used in relation to any possible road pricing policy and whether there will be potential reductions in traffic due to people now living in the surrounding villages moving into the city to be nearer their work?

A: Neither had been built into the modelling. The second point would be likely to improve results.

5. Do the models apply to the period 7.30-9.30am?

A: Yes.

Comments about the possible Park and Ride site on Huntingdon Road:

6. The idea of a Park & Ride on Huntingdon Road may be a false assumption if it is to pick up people on short trips rather than those coming from a distance.
7. People will not use the Guided Bus if they can drive to a Park & Ride on Huntingdon Road.
8. Important that the Guided Bus initiative and the Transport Strategy ideas come together in time.

A: To pick up people on longer trips. Currently 1200 vehicles per hour travel along Huntingdon Road so diverting them is necessary but how needs more investigation. The decision about the location of the Park & Ride would be taken in 2020. The officers have been in discussions with the Guided Bus team and these will inform the Area Action Plan.

Other points raised were:

9. What led the consultants to think that the Rail Station would be too far for people to choose to cycle there? Research shows that 23% of all journeys from Castle ward are by cycle.

A: Benchmarks from other studies were used which show that casual users would be put off by the distance although committed users would probably cycle.

10. Right frequency of buses is essential - eg C7 on Histon Road not so successful at 10 minute intervals but very successful at 20 minute intervals.

A: That is constantly being reviewed with the bus operators.

11. Assuming that there are modal shifts (from the car to other modes) in the earlier years, have these been factored in to the potential impact in later years?

A: That has been tested.

12. What are the proposed access points to the proposed radial route to Huntingdon Road and what public transport would serve this? Would the Guided Bus be used?

A: The idea is to have a route running parallel to Huntingdon Road that will exit on to Madingley Road. This route would need to have bus lanes, bus detector signals etc. There would be no extension of the Guided Bus used.

13. The argument for using the sinuous route sound good. Why does it stop where it does which seems too soon? Would differences in design of the housing help or hinder?

A: There is no demand for an orbital route and the sinuous route is intended to integrate the transport policy with the master plan for the university site. So whether such a sinuous route is possible depends on the design of where the parking is and where the housing is.

Atkins agreed to send members the reference to a document by English Partnerships on the design of car parking which indicates that the tide had been moving away from on-street parking to parking in back courtyards and was now swinging back again.

Atkins/P
Cook

14. What is the projected modal split?

A: This deferred and will be brought to a later meeting.

15. For the public consultation, clear visual images will be necessary.

A: Agreed.

16. Are orbital routes considered only for public transport? And if so, would the sinuous route pick up the maximum number of people?

A: The sinuous route would be a general-purpose single carriageway with restrictions to deter people from using it as a cut through. To use it as a public transport only route would be hard to justify on cost grounds. However, the roads in the university site do need to be able to accommodate public transport. Page 101 of the report shows a diagrammatic representation of infrastructure for cars (for site residents to access the district centre), buses, pedestrians and cyclists. What has to be made clear to the public is that the cycle route is not a road and this becomes part of the detailed design. Cambridgeshire Horizons are devising a Cambridge Design Guide in collaboration with the local authorities and this will be ready in the New Year and could be considered at a meeting of the Reference Group.

17. Important to learn the lessons from Cambourne - the sinuous route there has caused many problems, with the off street parking not being used and people parking on this sinuous route.

18. The Chair suggested that a tour of Cambourne be organised for members so that they could see on the ground the issues being raised.

P Cook?

19. Important that the various strategies - the North orbital road, junction design, improving existing junctions - be implemented to a proper time sequence.

A: It is recognised that by 2025 there will be very significant traffic problems which will be addressed by the Long Term Transport Strategy and the study. A transport assessment will be required later on for this North West development.

Members raised the following points about the public consultation, having looked at the leaflets which are being handed out to the public:

20. What is happening on the three dates mentioned in the leaflet?
21. We have to address any ideas the public may get that it is all a "done deal".
22. It also needs to be clear that the presentations are not from either the NWFMRG nor the local authorities.
23. Handouts for public to take away should be considered.
24. Any press release needs to highlight that this is not a planning application.

A: Officers have given careful thought to these exhibitions. It was considered important to present an overview, so as well as the consultation on the Issues and Options for the joint Cambridge City and South Cambs Area Action Plan, David Wilson Homes and the University will have exhibition areas. The University is going to present work to date and the links with the Area Action Plan. They will indicate what the next steps are in relation to the Master Plan for the site. Officers have designed the layout of the exhibitions so that the public learn first about the Issues and Options on which they are being consulted which it is hoped address the points members have raised. A board containing clear simple bullet points from the leaflet will explain what the exhibition is about. Consideration will be given to providing a handout.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Chair