

Councillors Present:

County Councillors Reynolds (in the Chair) and White
City Councillors Kightley, Reid and Ward;
South Cambridgeshire District Councillors Bard, Bullman, Mason and Smith

Also Present:

City Council Officers: Sara Cass (Urban Extensions Project Manager); David Roberts (Planning Policy Manager); Brian Human (Head of Policy & Projects); Glen Richardson (Urban Design Manager); Dinah Foley-Norman (Principal Landscape Architect); Simon Payne (Director of Environment & Planning)
County Council Officers: Huw Nicholas (New Communities Project Lead); Kathy Baldwin (New Communities Project Lead); Craig Drury (Principal Transport Officer)
South Cambridgeshire District Council Officers: Caroline Hunt; Michael Monk (Planning Consultant working for South Cambridgeshire District Council); Keith Miles
David Grech (Conservation & Design Officer)

And

Peter Studdert (Cambridgeshire Horizons)

07/NWF/01 Election of Chair

County Councillor Reynolds was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

07/NWF/02 Apologies

Apologies had been received from County Councillor Pegram and City Councillor Durrant.

07/NWF/03 Declarations Of Interest

The following personal interests were declared:

Councillor Reid as her husband does occasional work for the University Estates Department.

Councillors Ward and White as resident members of the university.

Councillor Mason as a member of Histon Parish Council

Councillor Bullman as a member of Girton Parish Council

07/NWF/04 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

07/NWF/05 Public Speaking Rights at the North West Fringe Member Reference Group

The Reference Group agreed that members of the public be allowed to speak at the meetings and that the protocol used by the City Council who administer the meetings be adopted.

07/NWF/06 North West Cambridge Area Action Plan; Results of Issues and Options participation; Determining the Site Footprint, Responses to Representations and preferred approaches

The officers introduced the item and a revised version of Option A was tabled. This was to provide a green open space comparable to Jesus Green of Lammas Land in Cambridge and to shield the new development from noise from the M11.

Councillor Bard asked for clarification of the difference between the new proposal and Option B.

The officers amended a copy of the Option A map to indicate the new boundaries of the development and the open space. The Chair advised a short break during which members could look at this amended map.

The Chair invited the members of the public who wished to speak to do so.

Lindsay Dane, representing the University of Cambridge, addressed the meeting and his submission is attached to these minutes.

Dr de Lacey, Chairman, Girton Parish Council then spoke. He had received very short notice of the possibility of addressing the meeting but welcomed the opportunity. He made the following points:

- Referring to page 15 paragraph 4.8 of the covering report he quoted the sentence “Indeed within the new University quarter which will be developed, a wide and open gap could actually hinder the creation of a cohesive and sustainable community by making distances within it, especially to the local centre which will be needed, unnecessarily long.” He referred the Reference Group to the various representations that Girton Parish Council had made with regard to creating a cohesive and sustainable community.
- The majority of the development space is in Girton Parish.
- The plan does not address the integrity of the Parish.

The Chair asked the officers to respond to the comments made by Dr De Lacey. Michael Monk said that the officers regarded the new development as an urban extension of Cambridge and not an extension to Girton village. The intention was to protect the separate identity of Girton village by the strategic gap since development does decrease separate identity.

With regard to the proposal tabled at the meeting, Mr Monk referred to paragraph 7.4 of Paper 1 which stated that officers considered that option A should be preferred over options 10.1, C and D as it would better maintain the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt and provide an acceptable setting to Cambridge.

The Chair invited members to comment on the new proposal.

Members expressed the following:

- There are two strong features in the landscape viewed from the American Cemetery – the treescape on the skyline along the Huntingdon Road is important and the M11 which is well shrouded with trees at this point. With the proposed development the Huntingdon Road skyline would disappear.
- The 20m contour line is an arbitrary feature in the landscape and is being used inappropriately to guide the placing of features in the site.

- The views from the M11 towards the development should be compared with the views from the rest of the M11 into the city.
- Important not to weight the views inappropriately; character includes built form as well as landscape.
- Options A and B do not make enough use of the potential space available for development.
- Retain as much of the green belt as possible especially that in the Washpit valley which could also help with the conservation of water.
- The strategic gap is the appropriate place for retaining a limited amount of green belt.
- The public like the possibility of green space internal to the development so important to safeguard the provision of open space in the city's part of the site and this becomes squeezed out in Option A.

Councillor Reid, Lead Member for the City Council, said that the need was to find an option that the district councils could agree which was what had led to the amended Option A. She proposed that rather than seeking a common view at the meeting, that a proposal be agreed that could be put to both councils at their respective meetings in July. Councillor Ward seconded that proposal.

Councillor Bard, Lead Member for South Cambridgeshire, said that a definite proposal was required to be taken to the meetings in July.

Cllr Ward, as Chair of the City Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee proposed that the councils agree the amended Option A and leave the University to fight their disagreement with the Inspector.

The Chair asked officers to formulate some wording for the amended Site A proposal. The Joint Member Reference Group agreed:

"The Joint Member Reference Group recommends Site A, but with a largely circular central open space more akin to 10.1 to be taken forward by officers in consultation with the Executive Members to put to the meetings of each council in July, together with full assessments and sustainability appraisal."

Following an introduction by Huw Nicholas, who confirmed that neither Option 10.1, Option A nor the amended Option A would preclude the ability of development to meet its transport requirements, the members commented on transport issues:

- Concerns about the proposed orbital route from Histon Road going straight over at the Travellers Rest and through the site to the Madingley Road Park and Ride Site. The offset junction at Histon road regarded as potentially dangerous.
- There seems to be no direct route for private transport.

Huw Nicholas explained that access via Huntingdon Road was under consideration and that the district councils' responses to the consultation would lead to a final study which in turn would be subject to consultation.

The Reference Group then considered Paper 2 and made the following comments to which officers replied (A):

- Noted that the NIAB site was not considered as part of the Area Action Plan and that raised some issues since the planning application for the NIAB site

would be determined before the first meeting of the Joint Development Control Committee.

A: The councils took the considered decision to treat the two sites separately and they do not need to be linked.

- Referring to paragraphs 4.16 and 4.17 of the covering report: since the consultation took place, proposals to deal with drainage issues had moved forward and Cambridgeshire Horizons was mapping out a strategy for drainage for the whole of Cambridgeshire. In addition, conservation of water was preferred to mitigation. The Environment Agency is critical (see paragraph 7.2.5) and the lack of firm intent about water supply and foul drainage.

A: Conservation measures are suggested in the paper and the strategy referred to had yet to be drafted. The Strategy would not refer to mitigation measures. The Water companies are statutory consultees and all this needed to link into the comprehensive water strategy.

- Re paragraph 4.17, could the harvesting of grey water be included?
- It was important to obtain positive responses from all the utility companies; an assurance that provision would be made was not sufficient.
- A hope expressed that re-consideration be given to the location of the secondary school.
- Clarification required of key workers in planning policy terms and the university's use of the term priority workers.

A: Agreed to clarify the definitions of key workers and priority workers.

- The Highways Agency and their modelling were a critical part of the success of the scheme.

The Reference Group noted the responses to the Issues and Options document and the preferred approach to the Area Action Plan as set out in Paper 2.

The meeting closed at 4.25pm.

Chair