

Councillors Present:

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

Also Present:

City Council Officers: Sara Cass (Urban Extensions Project Manager); David Roberts (Planning Policy Manager);
County Council Officers: Kathy Baldwin (New Communities Project Lead); Paul Cook (Head of Transport Policy and Strategy);
South Cambridgeshire District Council Officers: Caroline Hunt (Principal Planning Officer); Keith Miles (Planning Policy Manager).

08/NWF/01 Apologies

Apologies had been received from County Councillor Pegram.

08/NWF/02 Declarations of Interest

The following personal interests were declared:
Councillor Smith as a director of Emmaus College
Councillor Reid as her husband does occasional work for the University Estates Department.
Councillors Ward and White as resident members of the university.
Councillor Kightley as an employee of NIAB.

08/NWF/03 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2007 were amended as follows:

On page 3 the second paragraph beginning “Members were reminded that transport study had been discussed at” was amended to “Members were reminded that **the NW** transport study had been discussed at”.

In addition it was requested that the diagrams tabled by Paul Cook (minute 07/NWF/11) be appended to the minutes for clarification purposes.

Subject to these amendments, the minutes were then agreed as a correct record.

08/NWF/04 Public Speaker, Dr D de Lacey

The Chair invited the Chair of Girton Parish Council, Dr De Lacey (who had expressed a wish to use the public speaking rights) to contribute to the meeting.

Dr de Lacey asked two questions of the meeting:

1: Who will administer the development, put simply as “who gets the precept, who empties the bins?”

Caroline Hunt from South Cambridgeshire District Council replied that the detail was unclear at this stage. She said that although some of the proposed scheme boundaries fell within Girton Parish Council, the intention was that all AAP developments would be seen as part of an urban extension to Cambridge. Management and maintenance of such areas would require a parallel planning process, which was outside of the scope of this particular AAP.

2: What happens if the proposals to conserve water fail?

David Roberts from the City Council replied that water conservation proposals once approved in the plan should be achieved unless there were good reasons for failure.

Cllr Reid commented that the plans were far-reaching and ambitious which would help to ensure that the proposed conservation targets would be achieved.

08/NFW/04 North West Cambridge Area Action Plan; Responses to the Preferred Options.

Sara Cass introduced the report and informed the members present of the process that had been followed to date. The Chairman added that once the responses had been made and the draft action plan approved there would be no further chance to input and the group should not have to meet again.

The Chairman then invited Caroline Hunt from South Cambridgeshire District Council to introduce the supplementary report on the site footprint. She said that the report had come about as a desire to conduct a final check prior to the submission of the plan, to ensure that the objectives of maximising the usable area within the site whilst having robust and defensible boundaries had been achieved. She added that part of the rationale for doing so was that feedback had been received from the University commenting that the footprint of the development would result in a reduced number of residences than required and so the plan had been revisited.

A number of councillors voiced their support for this approach, saying that the university should be supported wherever feasible, although it was asked if there was any credibility in the University's original plan and whether or not it could be justified.

The group then discussed the report and the following topics were covered:

- Boundaries, especially those to the north and west of the site. Concerns were expressed that if open spaces were left on the edges of the site they would be developed at a further point.
- Effects on wildlife, a request was made for the ecology of the brook to be undisturbed
- The level of development and the number of dwellings requested by the University in the original application
- Access roads, Councillors commented that the plan was unclear if the access road to the site ran through a designated open area, thus devaluing its purpose, and it was also pointed out that residents of the Huntingdon Road were keen for back to back development (back gardens to back gardens).
- A site visit for City Councillors and officers.

As a caveat to the discussion a District Councillor reminded the group that the plan referred to only one area of NW Cambridge under development consideration and that there were projects in hand for other sites in the vicinity. Consequently it would be important to consider the infrastructure for the whole area. He added that the review took the number of dwellings to within 50 of the aspirations of the University.

Responding to the points raised, Caroline Hunt made the following comments:

- The original proposal from the University did not allow for alternative boundaries to be drawn up. It had been foreseen that the useable space for the development would be in the centre of the site.
- The South Cambridgeshire ecologist had been consulted and had found no major issues, however there were issues that would need to be addressed in the next stage of the planning process.
- As regards the level of development the University had asked for 2000 – 2500 dwellings and this latest review had got close to the upper figure.
- A site visit could be arranged. (**Action Caroline Hunt**)

David Roberts from the City Council commented that officers were generally unsupportive of access roads to developments through open spaces. He added that the final plan was subject to refinement and would be submitted to the City and South Cambridgeshire Councils in a few weeks.

The meeting **ENDORSED** the:

1. the revised site footprint boundary to be shown on the Proposals Map contained within the Submission Draft Area Action Plan (as attached as appendix A of the supplementary report);
2. the content of the report forming a supporting document to the AAP as a supplement to the Site Footprint Assessment 2007;
3. the principle that responses to the Preferred Options Report be amended to reflect that change drawing on the reasoning contained in the report.

Review of Appendix 1.

The Chair then took the Joint Member Reference Group through appendix 1 to the report "Representations and Responses to the Preferred Options Report on a page by page basis for comments and questions.

Sections 1-3 were accepted as written.

Section 4 Housing - Representation 3508.

The representations made had been informed by NAIB action plans. Group members agreed that scale and form of the proposals required investigation.

With this caveat section 4 was accepted.

Section 5 was accepted as written.

Section 6 Travel

Representation 3572 – The Council’s assessment of the representation contained a typing error and should read option 13.2 going forward, not 13.1. There followed a discussion about the type of road junction best for accessing the site and the Group was informed that research carried out at the end of 2007 suggested that a staggered junction would work best for the development..

Cllr Reynolds asked about the impacts on traffic flow of a staggered junction. K Brown from the County Council said that he could answer the question outside of the meeting and would cc the reply to the rest of the Group. **Action: K Baldwin.**

Representation 3659 – amend the assessment to remove the TIF comment as this has yet to be agreed and cannot be seen to predicate the outcome.

Representation 3376 - remove the words “which are currently still only the subject of consultation and to which there is as yet no commitment” from the assessment.

The County Council agreed to supply details about the route of the guided busway. **Action: K Brown.**

Representation 3880 – A request to use S106 monies to provide links to existing paths was discussed. C Hunt replied that there would be a need for a detailed study on motorway issues before the Master Plan was created and that any plan to use S106 monies for this purpose would need to be part of the Master Plan.

Representation 3511 – The Group was informed that residents of the Huntingdon Road were looking for public access behind back gardens to be denied because of security concerns. The Group was informed that this should be picked up in the development principles, which would look to minimise the opportunity for crime. The point was **NOTED.**

Section 7 was accepted as written.

Section 8, subject to the inclusion of a definition of Green Infrastructure in the glossary, was accepted as written.

Section 9 was accepted as written.

Section 10 was accepted as written.

Caroline Hunt then advised the meeting that by reviewing appendix 1 in depth the substance of the meeting had been covered.

The chairman moved to the recommendations of the report and the Joint Member Reference Group **ENDORSED:**

1. The responses to the Preferred Options Report (appendix 1 as amended)
2. The Submission Draft Area Action Plan (as attached as appendix 4 to the original report).

Councillor Reynolds, endorsed by Councillor Bard, thanked the officers present for their work on the proposals.

The meeting ended at 15:55.