

North West Cambridge University's Development Community Group

Minutes of meeting held on 15th November 2011
at Wolfson Court, Girton College, Cambridge

Those present:

John Chaplin, Storey's Way Residents Association (JC) CHAIR
Rev Janet Bunker, The Parish of the Ascension (JB)
Cllr John Hipkin, Cambridge City Council (JH)
Cllr Belinda Brooks-Gordon, Cambridge County Council (BBG)
Ann Mullinger, Windsor Road Residents Association (AM)
Hugh Taylor, 19 Acre Field Residents Association (HT)
Brian Walker, Castle Community Action Group (BW)
Helen Hutchinson, Windsor Road Residents Association (HH)
Peter Hayler, Chaplain to University Staff (PH)
Bob Dawson 19 Acre Field Residents Association (BD)
Cllr John Reynolds, Cambridgeshire County Council (JR)
Cllr Phillip Tucker, Cambridge City Council (PT)
Maya Ghousaini – Pdoc Committee (MG)
Julie Darsley – University Accommodation Service (JD)
Sibella Laing – Newcomers and Visiting Scholars (SL)

Project Team (PT)
Roger Taylor, North West Cambridge Project Director (RT)
Gavin Heaphy, North West Cambridge Project Construction Director (GH)
Ailsa Gunson, Aecom (AG)
Katie Fleming, Communications Team, North West Cambridge Project. (KF)

1. Introductions were made and the format of the meeting explained by the chair.

2. RT gave an update on the consultation process and next steps for the project. He also outlined some of the initial thinking about Phase 1.

The group asked the following questions - answered by RT.

Q: Is Phase One the centre of the site and will cycle paths go in at the same time as this is built? (JC)

Yes, as part of the first phase additional infrastructure will go in along with advanced planting - the University will be putting in more than is usually required at this stage.

RT highlighted that the PCT had very recently changed its mind about having a doctors surgery on the site and were now hoping to establish a super surgery on the NIAB site. However this is not what had been agreed before and will cause difficulties as there is no space on either site large enough to accommodate a surgery like this.

Q Do you know what the super surgery comprises? (BD)

No, only just had this communication from PCT.

Q Is the new college in Phase 1? (PH)

We are building 280 student units on the site as part of phase one but the decision about a new college is one for the University.

Q Is the school/ nursery in Phase 1? (JB)

Yes, it will be a single form entry in phase one to meet the needs of this community. Secondary education will be provided for through the Section 106 on the NIAB site.

Q Is there a trigger point for when the school will be built (i.e. do a certain number of homes have to be occupied)? There are concerns about the impact of getting this wrong. (JR)

The County Council is not tied to provision being in place for the very first house as the process to commission and build a new school is too slow. It could be that there may be about 50 houses before the school opens.

The idea of a free school is still being discussed.

3. The chair then opened a round table discussion about the following points:

- Serving the needs of all sectors of the new community
- Establishing a community with a transient and permanent population
- Creating cohesion between University and Non University residents

The following points were raised:

Some consideration should be given to shared ownership of community facilities, not just the University being totally in control. (JH)

There have been intense efforts by the community workers and Community Council at Orchard Park and this has had a real impact on helping that community to be more cohesive. They also have a website. A central point for the community needs to be established which can evolve as time goes on and more people arrive on the site. (JH)

A shared car scheme could be considered - perhaps small electric cars, a shared car already works in some communities. (JH)

Some community facilities could be built by community members - perhaps parts of the community could be responsible for parts of the landscape etc. (JH)

Would have like to have seen a library on the site given that it is a University site it is a missed opportunity. Also great for community cohesion. (JH)

The governance of the development is important, when it is half its final size it will be the size of a ward so political representation needs to be considered - parish council? (JH)

Consider putting in rangers early, they deal with graffiti, overhanging trees in the streets etc and are recognised in the streets - this has worked well in the City. (JH)

Q What will be set up in terms of community office/ political representation? (JC)

Yes, it could even be that this group is an early incarnation, agree that it needs to be integrated.

Q When will details be declared - all we know is that it is a syndicate? (PH)

At the appropriate time, we are currently gearing up for phase one. This will be addressed through the Section 106, e.g. the Community Hall.

Q Ownership seems soft compared to infrastructure? (PH)

It is difficult when the future community is not here. However we are setting up focus groups with post docs in the New Year.

Q Has any consideration been given to the name? This is important to help people identify with it? (BD)

We appreciate this and will not suddenly announce a name. We have been working with the local authority to agree a process and will probably run a public exercise to come up with a name.

Q What community facilities will be included on the site? (JC)

The facilities are not just for the site and we plan to put in a management plan which allows access to things like the sports fields to other people both locally and in the rest of Cambridge.

It includes the school, community hall, doctors, sports hall, library contribute to NIAB site, sports pitches.

Q How will the site integrate with the NIAB site? Is there an issue with the timing of the NIAB site around things like the library? (AM)

Although there are some shared facilities, it is built to be a community in its own right and the phasing is not tied to NIAB's timing. We understand that they are hoping to get consent by Christmas.

Q If there is a parish council or equivalent will this represent the transient nature of the many of the residents? (HH)

Yes. There will be a transient community but we are looking at there being sub communities on different parts of the site and there will be a physical difference in the accommodation e.g. postgraduates will be in apartments and blocks of accommodation.

BBG then raised a concern about the local infrastructure and her concerns about what will happen if this isn't right. A 'them and us' culture is a worry. For example the lack of shops etc on the West Cambridge site means that this is not working well. She also highlighted concerns about the money which has been allocated by the project to promote the guided bus.

RT told the group that the money allocated in the Section 106 agreement was there to mitigate the impact of the development and that they had been guided by the Highways Agency and County Council in some of the transport and traffic measures. The project team is happy to discuss these further as necessary. He agreed that they are aware of the need to ensure that no 'them and us' culture exists on the site.

There was then a discussion about faith groups and their role in the new development. PH highlighted that faith groups can be helpful in helping communities to mix and reflected on his personal experience of using a coffee morning to bring people who were otherwise quite isolated together on the West Cambridge site. He highlighted that having facilities for all faiths was very important especially when those living on the development would be from all around the world. He highlighted his concerns that the community centre would not necessarily be big enough and that there wasn't enough clarity yet on how it would be run.

There was then a discussion about the best language to use with AM suggesting that faith doesn't always capture other groups like humanists and her concerns about underplaying the contribution of groups like this. She wondered if another word could be found to capture both types of group.

RT responded to the question about the community facilities by telling the group that there will be a workshop to gather ideas and create a brief for the community hall and that this will include other groups.

JH highlighted the intellectual assets of those who would be living on the new site and talked about his hope that those living locally would benefit from having the very brightest minds on their doorstep. He expressed his hope that they would be a part of the community, contributing to community education. This would be excellent for older residents. He hopes the University of the Third Age will have an outpost. He also said that he hoped the University would take control of the primary school and that the finest minds would be dropping in on lessons.

JC asked the group if anyone had direct experience of building a community?

BBG offered to send Steph Winteringham (CM) a copy of a member led review which Cllr Sue Gymer has conducted on Cambourne and Orchard Park.

PH mentioned some work Horizons had done.

JC highlighted the importance of the church in building the community in Cambourne. In particular he highlighted the mothers and toddlers group.

RT told the group that the University was in this for the long term and was very committed to long term sustainability of this community. If anything the tension with the LAs is that the University want to stay very involved.

BD asked that the project team think carefully about the PCT's idea to create a super-surgery on one of the sites rather than two GP surgeries. He said that if it could be a base for health visitors, midwives etc it could be very important for a young community.

RT told the group that the issue was really around the practicalities of how this could possibly be accommodated at this very late stage.

Q Are there plans for Occupational Health, dental to develop outposts on the site? (PH)

A couple have indicated they might like to relocate. (RT)

Q Will there be common rooms? (MG)

In the key worker housing no as these will be houses, but in the postgraduate accommodation there will be. (RT)

4. It was decided that the next meeting should take place towards the end of January and that KF should circulate some dates and possible topics for discussion.

ENDS