

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cambridge East Member Reference Group held on
Tuesday, 28 November 2006

PRESENT:

Councillors: J Durrant (Cambridge City Council, Labour Spokesperson on Environment), N Harrison (Cambridgeshire County Council), Cllr L Herbert (Cambridge City Council, Coleridge Ward), Mrs CA Hunt (South Cambridgeshire District Councillor, Teversham Ward), AG Orgee (Cambridgeshire County Council, Sawston Electoral Division), Ms S Reid (Cambridge City Council, Chair of Environment Scrutiny Committee), JE Reynolds (Cambridgeshire County Council, Executive Member), Ms C Smart (Cambridge City Council, Romsey Ward), Mrs DSK Spink MBE (South Cambridgeshire District Council Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder), RJ Turner (South Cambridgeshire District Councillor, The Wilbrahams Ward) and NIC Wright (South Cambridgeshire District Council Development and Conservation Control Committee Chairman)

Officers: Paul Cook Head of Service Transport Policy and Strategy,
Cambridgeshire County Council
Jonathan Dixon Principal Planning Officer (Transport)
Brian Human Head of Policy & Projects, Cambridge City Council
Barry Louth Transport Planning Manager
David Roberts Planning Policy Manager, Cambridge City Council

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Bailey (Cambridge City Council) and B Bradnack (Cambridge City Council). Councillors Dr SA Harangozo and Mrs HM Smith were in attendance, by invitation.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

On the proposal of Councillor Reid and seconded by Councillor Smart, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor J Reynolds be elected Chairman of this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

4. CAMBRIDGE EAST SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Introduction to the Study

The Head of Service Transport Policy and Strategy introduced the study 'Cambridge East Sustainable Transport Strategy Report', prepared by consultants Steer Davies Gleave. The study had been commissioned to inform the Area Action Plan for the proposed development in Cambridge East and would be used to respond to queries raised by the Inspector at the South Cambridgeshire Examination of the Cambridge East Area Action Plan, scheduled for summer 2007. The study set out a number of options which could be considered as a way of achieving a 60/40 split in favour of sustainable modes of transport. It was emphasised that the study was not a strategy for implementation but merely options which could be considered. Members would have plenty of opportunity to consider the options.

Consultants' Presentation

Cambridge East would be a major growth area with between 10,000 and 12,000 new dwellings and 5,000 new jobs. The construction would take place in 3 phases:

1. North of Newmarket Road
2. North of Cherry Hinton
3. Airport site

The objectives of the study were to maximise potential for sustainable transport and to minimise and mitigate negative traffic impacts. The core challenge was to achieve a target modal split of:

40% Car
35% Public Transport
25% Walking/Cycling

The study looked at these key journeys from Cambridge East:

1. City Centre
2. Addenbrooke's (Southern Fringe)
3. Northern Fringe

Journeys to the wider area and the railway station were also considered.

For each destination the consultant set out the options for public transport routes, cycling routes and highway improvements. The benefits and drawbacks for each option were also set out in the study.

The consultant emphasised that in order to achieve the desired reduction in car travel a 'Smarter Choice' element needed inclusion, promoting the sustainable travel options in a variety of ways through, for example, travel plans, marketing and real-time information. Smarter Choices would be a fundamental part of the package.

Phase 1 was a projected 1,750 houses to be built by 2016 and the 60/40 modal split would not be achieved during this phase of the development: all the phases would need to be completed before the desired 60/40 split would be achieved.

Members' Comments

Questions were raised concerning members' involvement with this study:

- Confirmation of the timetable for the study: the study would be presented to the Inspector in the summer of 2007 and the Inspector's verdict was likely to be received at the end of 2007.
- Incorporation of members' comments into the strategy, the influence members would have over the content of the study and who would make the final decision on what would be submitted: the Head of Transport Policy and Strategy assured members that the study was not a strategy and that their comments would be taken into account. It had been commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council to answer the Inspector's question whether the 60/40 split was achievable. This study had not gone to the Cambridgeshire County Council Cabinet and therefore was not the formal view of the County Council.
- The study would be taken to the City Council Scrutiny Committee and to a member group at South Cambridgeshire District Council in January 2007.

The members discussed whether an additional objective 'to preserve and enhance the

existing city' should have been included in the study. The following points were made:

- Change was inevitable and the challenge was how to marry the delivery of the development and preserve the City.
- The study could not have objectives that imply no change: 'protect' should be used rather than 'preserve'.
- The challenge was going to be people's mindset and interpretations of 'enhance'.
- An Officer pointed out that the Cambridge East Action Plan includes 'enhancement' and it was one of the overall aims of the County Council. It was agreed that this needed to be cross-referenced.
- The question was what to protect and what to enhance. It was felt that there was a need demonstrate to the Inspector that these difficult decisions had been deliberated.

The following points were raised regarding the content of the study:

- Study diagrams should be revised to give a much clearer indication of the location and description of the segregated and partial segregated bus lanes. More graphical visualisations of the proposals should be provided to give members a clearer understanding of the impact of the proposals and that these be brought to a future meeting.

Action: Steer Davies Gleave

- The focus on preserving / protecting Fen Ditton should be amended to take into account the importance of all the current housing developments along Ditton Road.
- With reference to the tree / verge removal, the study did not indicate what actions might be taken to mitigate the negative response from residents, for example landscaping and pollution protection.
- The study did not take into account the current congestion in East Cambridge and suggested that existing residents wanted reassurance that these problems were being tackled. Members were informed that a Long Term Transport Strategy was currently being developed to look at the wider issues as they affect the area.
- The members queried 2.88 (page 36), asking if the County were against a Southern Orbital Route. County Council Officers confirmed that the County had no view on the Southern Orbital Route and there were no proposals for it.
- The Consultant was asked to explain Figure 2.9 (page 37). It was suggested that these figures were misleading and it was requested that a table be made available to members showing the extra trips / additional modal traffic.

Action: Steer Davies Gleave

- The eastward moving traffic / access to the A11 hadn't been addressed.

The following comments were made concerning the implementation of the options:

- With regard to the sub-option 2.34 (page 14 of the study), members asked if it were worth pursuing if Network Rail felt that this option were undeliverable. The Consultant acknowledged that this option would be a challenge but there might be ways of making it beneficial to Network Rail and therefore gaining their support.
- The group felt that the feasibility of Phase 1 (North of Newmarket Road) as a stand-alone development hadn't been addressed. It was questioned whether the approach were robust enough for the Inspector. The Consultant confirmed that most developments did not have a 60/40 split and, in transport terms, solutions for Phase 1 could be found. Members stressed that the infrastructure should be in place before the first house is occupied. It was agreed that the consultants would look at how a 60/40 split might be achieved for the first phase of the development and that this would be discussed at a future meeting of the group.

Action: Steer Davies Gleave

- Members expressed concern over the environmental impact of crossing Coldhams Common. In particular, there was opposition to any route between the stream and railway line as this was reported to be the most bio-diverse area of the Common.

- The provision of a new link road to Fen Ditton interchange 2.87 (page 36) might result in traffic using it as a 'cut through' from Ely. This would have traffic implications for Waterbeach and Horningsea. The Consultant confirmed that he would check that this was included in the modelling.

Action: Steer Davies Gleave

It was acknowledged that a lot of work needed to be done before a strategy could be produced. It was highlighted that it was still unknown what Marshalls and Anglian Water were planning to do and it was suggested that the authorities should be putting pressure on them to make a decision.

Conclusion

The Chairman summarised the discussions and concluded that there were some difficult decisions to be made. There was more work for the consultants to do and there would need to be further open debate before the final strategy is agreed. The Group should meet again in the New Year. The purpose of the next meeting would be to review changes made to the study before it was submitted to the Inspector and to discuss the development of a Transport Strategy. Members agreed that the options should be progressed simultaneously and that the strategy was essential to provide clear guidance for the developers.

5. CAMBRIDGE EAST MEMBER REFERENCE GROUP: AMENDMENT TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

The Meeting ended at 12.10 p.m.
