

South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

t: 08450 450 500
f: 01954 713149
dx: DX 729500 Cambridge 15
minicom: 01480 376743
www.scambs.gov.uk



APPENDIX E

Mr Paul Milliner
Senior Planning Officer
Estate Management & Building Service
University of Cambridge
74 Trumpington Street
Cambridge
CB1 1RW

Our ref:

Your ref:

Date: 25 February 2009

Planning and Sustainable Communities

Contact: Caroline Hunt

Direct dial: 01954 713196

Direct email: caroline.hunt@scambs.gov.uk

Sent by email

Dear Paul

North West Cambridge Area Action Plan – Phasing and Housing Trajectory

I refer to our helpful meeting on Friday and would like to thank the University again for taking a positive approach to discussions around the issues of phasing and housing trajectory, which are important issues not only for the AAP but for South Cambs' work on the housing shortfall the Inspectors have identified in respect of the Site Specific Policies DPD examination. I thought it would be helpful to set out my understanding of the current position and to seek your confirmation of that.

The Submitted AAP housing trajectory assumed that there would be an early phase of development starting in the City and the site would be built out east to west. This resulted in completions starting to come forward in 2011/12 and 550 dwellings being completed in South Cambs by 2016, the South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy plan period.

The University's representations to the AAP examination advised that development would start a year later than the AAP assumed, ie. 2012/13, the early phase in the City not having been pursued, and this meant that there would be 215 dwellings completed in South Cambs by 2016.

The Inspector advised at the examination hearing that his preliminary view was that a start in 2012/13 was a reasonable position but he questioned whether as many dwellings could be completed in the first year in the City. This would have knock on implications for delivery in South Cambs. To look at a potential worse case scenario, it would be reasonable to look at the implications of a further years slip in completions in South Cambs which would give 65 dwellings by 2016. The reduction may not be as much as this, but it provides a robust basis to continue work on the housing shortfall. The Council would wish to explore this further with the University but in the timeframe for the housing shortfall report to Members, this is considered to be a reasonable potential worse case scenario. It should be noted that there are a number of

factors that need to be considered early on if an east to west phasing approach is to be pursued, in particular how primary education would be provided (noting the County Council would not normally accept temporary facilities) and whether a secondary access on Madingley Rise is acceptable and whether it would be needed for the long term development. These factors may affect whether an east to west phasing is appropriate.

The Inspectors have asked the Councils to carry out further work and public consultation on a larger site footprint option, which the Councils have agreed to undertake. Public consultation will take place between 9 March and 20 April. The University has indicated that if the larger site footprint were to be included in the adopted AAP, it may prefer a phasing plan where development starts around the local centre. This is due to the greater amount of development around the local centre which would affect the critical mass of development to support those facilities. The University has advised that a central start would deliver housing much earlier in South Cambs and that it would anticipate that 800 dwellings would be completed in South Cambs by 2016 with this approach. Given the absence of community services and facilities in west Cambridge and the lessons learnt from the Orchard Park development, the Councils support the principle of a start around the proposed local centre, in view of the greater potential to create a sustainable community from the start.

It is understood that there are various factors influencing the University's decision on phasing of the development. These include up front infrastructure costs such as upgrading the sewer along Madingley Road, and the greater length of upgrade required early on with a central start. There may be potential for external funding opportunities for major up front infrastructure costs, eg. through Housing Growth Fund, and this should be explored early on in view of the potential significance that it could have on the most sustainable approach to phasing.

At our meeting on Friday, the University also explained that its position on a central start could also be dependent on the inclusion of a supermarket in the local centre. The University said this would have the advantage of not requiring any market housing to deliver the early phases of development, particularly relevant in the current economic climate. The University advised that it envisaged a supermarket in the order of 4000-5000 sqm gross. You subsequently advised that 5000 sqm equates to 3250 sqm net. This gives a ratio of 65% gross to net and it is assumed that the bottom end of the range would therefore be 2600 sqm. This range of 2600-3250 sqm net is a significant size of superstore, comparable or potentially larger than the existing superstores in Cambridge, and the Council will clearly need to give proper consideration to this proposal with the City Council before being able to offer a view.

However, very initial thoughts are that such a large store, particularly towards the upper end of the range, at the heart of the development would present very real problems for place making. Such a proposal has also not featured in the transport modelling and its impacts would need to be tested. The University would therefore need to provide evidence to support any proposal for a food superstore and demonstrate how that would impact on both the achievement of the vision for NW Cambridge and the retail offer within Cambridge, including how it would fit with the findings of the Retail Study undertaken by the City and South Cambs and published October 2008. Regard will also need to be had to any implications of the current pattern of proposed development coming through the South Cambs DPD examinations, which envisages a greater level of development in the NW quadrant of Cambridge than anticipated in the Retail Study. Whilst detailed evidence may not be possible until further down the line, some initial evidence would be necessary if the Councils were to be able to reach a preliminary view on whether it could offer sufficient support for such a proposal in order to inform the AAP trajectory.

In conclusion, at this time it is not possible to determine the housing trajectory for the AAP development with any certainty and therefore also the dwellings numbers that could be relied on to be delivered in South Cambs to 2016. Delivery could be anywhere in the range 65 – 800 dwellings. The Council will therefore have to work on this basis for the immediate matter of

deciding its preferred sites to make up the housing shortfall. However, the trajectory will need to be clearer for the final stages of the AAP examination. The Council will continue to work with the University and the City Council, as well as other partners to take forward this important issue with a view to assisting the University in coming to a firmer view that could be included in its representations to the forthcoming public consultation on the Inspectors' larger site option.

I would appreciate it if the University could confirm if this is a reasonable summary of the current position, so that it can inform the Council's response to representations received to the housing shortfall consultation on the timing of the University's NW Cambridge development.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Hunt

Principal Planning Policy Officer