



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 2.4

North East Cambridge Update report

To: Housing and Communities Committee

Meeting Date: 9 March 2022

Public report: Yes

Lead Member Councillor Lewis Herbert (For City Council, Lead Member is Councillor Anna Smith, Leader of Cambridge City Council)

From: Fiona Bryant, Director Enterprise and Sustainable Development – Cambridge City Council

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Recommendations: The Housing and Communities Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the update report on the progress for North East Cambridge Core Site development.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress with the North East Cambridge area, and the Housing Infrastructure Fund programme delivery.
- 1.2 The North East Cambridge area activity broadly comprises three key projects
 1. North East Cambridge Area Action plan – led by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
 2. Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project – led by Anglian Water
 3. NEC Core Site Development – led by Cambridge 4 LLP , a joint venture between Anglian Water and Cambridge City Council (with reserved matters to Cambridge City Council and Anglian Water), with master developers U&I and TOWN.

2. Background

- 2.1 The CWWTP relocation will enable South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council's long held ambition to develop a new low-carbon city district on Cambridge's last remaining major brownfield site, known as North East Cambridge. The relocation of the existing waste water treatment facility will enable this new district to come forward and deliver 8,350 homes and 15,000 new jobs in North East Cambridge. “
- 2.2 Without the ability to relocate the CWWTP, the programme could not go ahead. The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) programme in 2017, provided a major opportunity to relocate the CWWTP. A successful application, prioritised by the CPCA, was approved in 2019, with the Development Funding Agreement, and Master Development Agreement approved by Homes England.
- 2.3 The emerging Local Plan has identified the site as an important component of the First Proposals (preferred options) in 2021 for the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan given its highly sustainable location and access to public transport.
- 2.4 The NEC Area Action Plan provides the strategic planning framework for the North East Cambridge Area, covering South Cambs and City geography and encompassing Cambridge Regional College, the Science Park, St Johns Innovation Park, Cambridge Business Park, Cowley Road Industrial estate and Chesterton Sidings.
- 2.5 The North East Cambridge Core site, jointly owned by Cambridge City Council and Anglian Water, consists of 48ha at the heart of the potential new district. It will include (subject to planning and DCO) mixed employment development and c5600 mixed type and tenure housing units (subject to planning). 40% will be affordable housing.

3. Programme Update

3.1 North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

- 3.1.1 The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan was approved at draft Regulation 19 stage by both South Cambridgeshire District Council, and Cambridge City Council in January 2022. In line with the statutory requirements for this plan, it will now be paused pending the

submission, and determination of the Development Consent Order for the Relocation project.

3.2 The Cambridge Waste Water Plant Relocation Project

3.2.1 The third, and final statutory stage for consultation on the CWWTP is due to launch at the end of February and will last for nine weeks. The Development Consent Order (DCO) is expected to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in Autumn 2022. Once accepted it enters a six -month examination process where Interested Parties are invited by PINS to provide more details of their views.

3.2.2 During this consultation, Anglian Water will be consulting on the updated design, updated plans for mitigation, and the preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)

3.2.3 As part of the consultation, information will be provided in the following ways:

- 10,000+ properties will receive a Consultation Leaflet, Feedback Form, and Freepost envelope.
- Free-to-use communications lines (email, phone and post), and hard copy materials available at Community Access Points
- Community Webinars
- Online information through project website, virtual exhibition, and interactive digital engagement platform
- Consultation publicised through media, stakeholders, and local information points
- Face to face events will be held

4. North East Cambridge Core Site

4.1 The Core site development project is only currently emerging now that the NEC AAP and CWWTP project have sufficiently progressed

4.2 Programme Timeline

4.2.1 The programme is complex with a high level of dependency between the three project timelines. The current estimated timelines are provided in the table below but future dates will need to be confirmed once more detailed plans are developed

Dat	Eve
Mar-20	Signing of HIF funding agreement
Jul -21	Design development – masterplan version x
Jul-21	Launch of vision and engagement stage 1
Jan -21	Launch of website
Jan-22	Finalisation of Phase 0 strategy proposal
Feb-22	Meanwhile site - Feasibility complete
Feb-22	Public launch event

May-22	Design development – masterplan version y
Jun-22	Launch of engagement stage 2 and finalisation of naming process
Set - 22	Engagement Festival
Jan-23	Meanwhile use – commencement of delivery of anchor use
May-23	Design development – masterplan version z
Jun-23	Launch of engagement stage 3
Jun-24	Core Site planning submission
Feb-25	Est Core Site planning determination
Mar-25	AAP submission *subject to LPA confirmation
Mar-26	AAP approval *subject to LPA confirmation

4.3 Vision & Values

4.3.1 2021 saw the establishment of a vision , promises and values for the Core Site

Our vision is for a new urban quarter that will support the health, happiness and wellbeing of local people, play an integral role in the future of Cambridge, and be an exemplar for sustainable 21st century development.

4.3.2 This is underpinned by three promises to the:

People - Support the **health, happiness and wellbeing** of the people who will live, work and spend time here

City - Be an **integral new quarter** of Cambridge, taking inspiration from the city, engaging with citizens' present needs and helping shape the future of Greater Cambridge

Planet -Be an **exemplar for development** fit for the challenges of the 21st Century, enabling sustainable lifestyles, enhancing nature and accelerating the transition to a net zero carbon world

And by six values

- Shaped by many
- Rooted in Cambridge
- Street Life
- Open to all
- Integrated with Nature
- Living within Environmental limits

4.3.3 In practice this means:

- A target number of 5600 homes, of which 40% will be affordable (2400) to support the needs of individuals on Cambridge's housing register (currently over 2000). It will include a variety of homes to meet the needs of people through all stages of life.
- Bringing much needed homes in proximity to key employment sites reducing the need for private travel which currently sees 260,000 car trips per day in and out of the city

- A 5 minute district centre - the Core Site's streets will be home to a variety of uses, providing places to work, shop and have fun within easy walking distance of home. Streets should take on many new roles — places for children's play, exercise, cafe tables and natural landscaping. A 21st century quarter with a vibrant and fun aesthetic 24/7
- It will support the growth of the green local economy with up to 6000 jobs. Facilities will include a mix of commercial, leisure, amenity, health, culture and community.
- A proposed net zero carbon development with a priority for cyclists and pedestrians. We envisage the Core Site will be, in large part, free of cars.
- Innovatively designed to make efficient use of valuable natural resources such as land, water and energy. We'll learn from nature in developing innovative approaches to design, construction, energy production and water management, minimising embodied and operational energy. It will make it easier for people to live a more sustainable and healthier lifestyle, with a high quality of life. We want the Core Site to incorporate nature and wildlife throughout its buildings, gardens, streets and parks. We want it to offer the opportunity to experience nature at first hand — through food growing, conservation initiatives and exploring wild places, and using nature to enhance wellbeing.

4.3.4 2021 has seen the reemphasis of those promises and values, and the start of communicating these as the principal vision to key stakeholders. Ongoing research is being undertaken into the core values of the project, scoping the potential for future thematic workshops and engagement content. Topic papers are being prepared to break down perceived issues around the Core Site, and will inform engagement activities.

4.3.5 Next steps include:

- A series of thematic workshops for the project team over the course of 2022, delivered by specialists in key areas relating to the values of the project, and undertaken in advance of, and to inform the next version of the masterplanning work.
- Ongoing preparation and promotion of the launch event (to take place Q1 2022), working alongside the engagement workstream, curating a series of talks, workshops and activities that explore the vision of the project.
- Ongoing research into key areas of the project vision, to include case studies in exemplar masterplanning and urban design, capturing additional ideas and initiatives.
- Development of possible phasing plans, in line with AAP strategic framework, and supporting cost plans

4.4 Engagement & Communications

4.4.1 An Engagement and Communications strategy was established as part of the initial business plan development. A communications protocol is in place and the Communications group meet monthly (City, SCDC, Homes England, Anglian Water, CPCA etc). 2021 has been a successful year for the communications and engagement workstream, with significant steps taken in starting to actively engage with key stakeholders and working towards publicly launching the project in 2022.

4.4.2 Selected stakeholder interviews commenced in July 2021 – our first external active engagement process – and continue to be undertaken with a range of organisations. As of December 2021, the team have met with over 30 selected stakeholder groups, including a meeting with the Mayor and colleagues. Harder to reach groups have also been specifically approached. Overall, these have generally been very well received and the team is building up a good rapport with selected stakeholders. A full report is now being prepared to

summarise this phase of engagement. The lessons from that will inform the brief for the next stage of masterplanning work. A stakeholder database (Simply Stakeholders) is being used to collate responses and feedback from the stakeholder interviews. This tool will ensure we collect and record extensive and meaningful feedback. This engagement will continue throughout the year.

4.4.3 The Phase 1 website went live in January 2022. Modifications to enhance its accessibility are now being investigated.

4.4.4. Current Focus is on preparing for the public launch of the Core Site on 26th February. A preview event for Key Stakeholders (primarily Members and MPs) will be held on 23rd February.

4.4.5 Later in 2022 there will be an engagement programme with local schools run by Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination, and we are currently briefing their team in readiness for that programme to commence after the launch event.

4.4.6 Working with Sortition, preparatory work for the recruitment of local residents to an Ideas Exchange is underway, with a view to recruitment starting in February and the Ideas Exchange starting to meet after the launch event. The exchange will be a longer-term programme with the single group over the project design period, and will occur alongside other forms of informal, formal engagement and consultation.

4.5 Branding

4.5.1 Initial work to propose a branding opportunity across the whole AAP was not accepted, so the team went out to tender to select a branding agency to assist with the selection of a permanent name and to develop the permanent branding for the Core site. A local practice, MOBAS, was appointed. MOBAS have been engaging with partners and the public via meetings and workshops since October last year. This engagement will continue with the February/March launch, with development of a shortlist and recommendation to City Council Executive and Anglian Water Board Members in 2022.

4.6 Planning and Transport

4.6.1 In line with the planning strategy the team have been preparing a series of 'evidence base papers' to support our emerging masterplan and further demonstrate alignment with the objectives and key parameters of the AAP. These likely to include papers relating to community infrastructure, open space, density/ heights and commercial use mix.

4.6.2 Under the leadership of the Core Site team and its advisers Pell Frischmann, substantial progress has been made on an Interim Transport Strategy for North East Cambridge covering the AAP area. A Task & Finish Group of Transport Consultants of the NEC landowners/ developers, together with officers from the County Council and the AAP Team has now all but completed the draft document. Further work is being investigated on updating the model data. Despite the good progress, this area remains a key risk to the project.

4.7 . Sustainability & Quality of Life

4.7.1 In late 2021, the team procured through tender a strategic partner for Sustainability and Quality of Life. As a result, Useful Projects were appointed to the role. They are

undertaking a series of workshops with key stakeholders , with a view to providing a draft framework for the site in early 2022

4.8 Meanwhile Use

4.8.1 Meanwhile Uses are important elements of site and location activation. The team have been developing feasibility and plans for three key uses, including:

- Sustainable Food production, training and distribution
- Affordable workspace linked to clean technology
- Modern Methods of construction training

4.8.2 A business plan will be prepared and presented to the LLP board in 2022, with a view to progressing towards a planning submission in September 2022. A recent bid to the CPCA for funding for this under the Mayoral Gain Programme, has been progressed through an initial stage, and the Project Initiation document will be submitted in March.

4.9 Early Stage Phasing (“The Way In”)

4.9.1 There is now significant momentum behind the exploration of a possible early phase on the Core Site. The key principle is that initial phase should have no detrimental effect on the wider masterplan, the CWWTP relocation works or the NEC AAP.

4.9.2 The draft proposal includes a mix of flexible commercial space of exemplar design, and a neighbourhood hub providing a mix of community, cultural engagement and transport uses. Current and next steps include:

- Initial engagement with planning team
- EIA scoping
- soft market testing with potential funders
- Sustainability review with Useful Projects
- Development of Communications and Engagement Strategy

5. Significant Implications

5.1. **Financial Implications**

5.1.1 The draw down on HIF funding in regard to the relocation project is on track within the enabling stage of the project. This funding is not controlled by the CPCA.

5.1.2 The Core site development current financial support is guided by the Master Development Agreement and the project business plan, which is revised annually.

5.2. **Legal Implications**

5.2.1 None specific for this report.

5.3 Public Health implications

5.3.1 None specific for this report. The design for the core site will be informed by engagement with PHE and Integrated Care colleagues and in line with the emerging Quality of Life framework provisions

5.4 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

5.4.1 Environmental and Climate change impact targets, metrics and monitoring procedures are being developed for the core site through the emerging sustainability and quality of life frameworks

5.5 Other Significant Implications

5.5.1 Communication and Engagement activity to date is provided in the report. Voluntary and Statutory consultation will be carried out at appropriate stages

5.5.2 EQiA reports will be submitted alongside Cambridge City Council's reports to committee in line with agreed processes

6. Background Papers

[Core Site - new urban quarter - Cambridge \(coresitecambridge.co.uk\)](http://coresitecambridge.co.uk)

[North East Cambridge Area Action Plan \(greatercambridgeplanning.org\)](http://greatercambridgeplanning.org)

[Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project – About The Project \(cwwtpr.com\)](http://cwwtpr.com)