



(View from the new centre for biodiversity conservation named after Sir David Attenborough)

Report on workshop, Saturday 1st October 2016. Keeping Cambridge Special.

"Come and tell us what you think makes it special and how should we look after it"

Background & purpose

The Keeping Cambridge Special workshop (initiated by the Cambridge PPF 'Heritage Watch' committee) was designed to revisit the problems of caring for the historic city in these fast moving times. Successful growth must go hand in hand with world class stewardship and enhancement. How do we manage that? Building on the precedent of the 2030 Vision workshops in 2009*, partner organisations brought a lively mixture of perspectives from heritage, business, designers, planners, collegiate and residential angles.

Some of the outcomes of the 2030 Vision workshops were the formation of Cambridge Ahead, the LEP and ultimately the 'City Deal'. Astonishingly, the 2014 City Deal Agreement** does not specifically mention the historic environment and caring for the heritage assets of the City, in its strategic aims for growth and prosperity. 'Quality of life' is now the planners' shorthand to cover happiness and the impact of every day surroundings on people but what does it mean? The City has a well regarded & democratically approved Local Plan*** under review to protect and enhance Cambridge.

But why do people feel disengaged and how can we improve good planning?

The meeting

Chair – Ros Aveling (Chair of Cambridge PPF)

Presentations

Community concerns	Wendy Blythe (Federation of Cambridge Residents Associations)
A college view	Nicky Padfield (Master of Fitzwilliam College)
The role of the architect	Tom Foggin (The Cambridge Association of Architects)
The business view	David Cleevely (Cambridge Ahead)

Breakout groups – facilitated by:

1 Andy Williams (AstraZeneca)	6 Emma Fletcher (Smithson Hill)
2 Graham Hughes (Cambridgeshire County Council)	7 Joel Carre (Cambridge City Council)
3 Andrew Limb (Cambridge City Council)	8 Jeremy Smith (Cambridgeshire County Council)
4 Nick Heath (Savills)	9 February Phillips (5 th Studio)
5 Matthew Bullock (St Edmunds College)	10 Ian Mather (Mills & Reeve)

Report back and discussion – led by Lewis Herbert (Leader of Cambridge City Council)

Summary review with link to film record of presentations & discussion

The talks were inspiring and the discussions - enlightening and enjoyable. The four main presentations can be regarded as seminal viewing to understand & guide sensitive future development of Cambridge City.

1. Wendy Blythe spoke with passion about Cambridge as a beautiful and sustainable City.

We cannot take retention of its unique urban and rural interface for granted. *'We need to fight for a vision of the City that is shaped by beauty, sustainability and genuine public engagement'*. Local people have the right to reject ugliness.

[Wendy Blythe Presentation 1.10.16](#)

2. Nicky Padfield personally summed up her college perspective, illustrating the dynamic relationship between the City and the universities. The problems and delights of maintaining a campus built by leading 20th Century architects. *'Ours is the new heritage but the duty of care we have to our buildings is the same'*. She covered the challenges of accommodating staff and contract researchers and the safety concerns of student cyclists. As the North West Cambridge site grows, Fitzwilliam College will be in the 'new centre' of the City.

[Nicky Padfield Presentation 1.10.16](#)

3. Tom Foggin eloquently talked through the process & challenges of creating good architecture and places. The importance of the strategic plan and the brief. Who for, Why and What? *"Unless we get the brief right, and properly understand what we are trying to achieve, then the entire [process] will be fundamentally flawed."*. After completion, it's essential to review use and learn from the feedback. We should understand other cities and avoid repeating mistakes. (A sequence of a tap design nicely illustrated the point of failed planning).

[Tom Foggin Presentation 1.10.16](#)

4. David Cleevely gave a jaw dropping presentation about the magnitude of growth, - at the present rate employment is doubling every ten years and we have added 50,000 jobs in the last 5 years alone. *'We have to understand there is no City in Europe more successful than this place'*. It is essential we take this one chance to seize the right 'strategic direction' or we will be throwing away a jewel. We should be bold and dare to think of underground tunnels.

[David Cleevely Presentation 1.10.16](#) - David Cleevely

Report back & discussion

The ten breakout group facilitators were given two minutes to report from their hour long table session.

The leader of the City Council, Cllr Lewis Herbert opened it to the floor & expertly chaired the final discussion.

[Facilitator summaries 1.10.16](#)

[Q&A Auditorium 1.10.16](#) Final discussion.

Feedback and next steps

Audience feedback praised the well structured workshop. The 125 participants all had a chance to say something. The facilitators were commended for their skills in wrapping up opinion.

(See appendix for abridged summary of the points raised).

The next stage is to capture & forcefully promote the best ideas to the decision-makers in future forums.

It was suggested the four partner organisations of Keeping Cambridge Special get together to progress.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the Chairs, facilitators, speakers, volunteers, audience and the partner organisations. Thank you to Mick Young, the facilities manager CMS for all the behind scenes support on display areas & auditorium. And a special thank you to Peter Landshoff who organised the superb venue and masterminded the workshop.

Penny Heath
CPPF- Heritage Watch committee.

[Programme note with Slides. 1.10.16](#)

Partner organisations

[Cambridge Past, Present and Future](#)

[Federation of Cambridge Resident Associations](#)

[Cambridge Ahead](#)

[The Cambridge Association of Architects](#)

APPENDIX: KEEPING CAMBRIDGE SPECIAL - SEMINAR /WORKSHOP. 1st October 2016	
Abridged notes on breakout groups and audience discussion: key issues and actionable ideas*	
1	VISION & STRATEGY <p>Piece-meal improvements won't work. A coherent and comprehensive plan with a 50 year vision. Structure for the whole region. 'Joined up thinking'. Consider world class importance. Set in context of a pre-eminent global city. Be ambitious and exemplary</p> <p>The strategic direction has to be shared by all. Local residents, small businesses as well as big businesses, the University, Colleges - with a collective voice</p> <p>City Deal planning period too short</p> <p>Check- Who is the growth for? Now and the future. Business, residents, employees?</p> <p>Query. Who is going to do the long term vision? Need planning and strategy experts</p> <p><i>'Beauty is not a luxury we can only have when we are rich; it is a way of shaping the changes we need and want so that they make a positive contribution to everyone's lives, as well as protecting the things and places we most value. To succeed, we need to be clear about our objectives: beauty, sustainability and genuine public engagement must be at their heart'</i></p> <p>* Revisit the current Local Plan (with understanding it must be adopted) and start on next Local plan. Set up a Strategic Vision group- starting with the four 'vibrant partner organisations' of this meeting.</p>
2	GROWTH - ATTITUDES, positive and negative <p>Sense of disconnect between planning, beauty and growth</p> <p><i>"It's like riding a tiger. You can't tame the tiger but you can check it"</i></p> <p>'Not anti- growth' - just concerned about the type of growth in the City and whether this is sustainable. Capacity and regional water issues etc. need addressing.</p> <p>Spread the magic of Cambridge. Not everyone can live here. Direct growth to where needed Build well connected corridors. Royston, Chatteris, Bury St Edmunds, [St. Neots]. Fenland. What is Greater Cambridge?</p>
3	HERITAGE, GOOD DESIGN and ENVIRONMENT <p>Need for a collective understanding of the environmental and social capacity of the City Centre and suburbs. (The foot fall, impact of region's impending lack of water, river, flooding, air pollution, weight restrictions for all vehicles).</p> <p>Green Open spaces- Keep Cambridge's urban & rural interface sacrosanct. Don't develop or exploit with events. Take qualities of the City Centre to the outskirts</p> <p>Streetscape needs better place making and Civic voice champions <i>" Queens Road should be one of the most beautiful streets in Europe, not a bus corridor."</i></p> <p>Developers must be prepared to go that extra 5% to give us quality buildings and attractive surroundings. Need fun & creativity in the dialogue</p> <p>Importance of a pre eminent global city like Cambridge achieving sustainable development goals. It has the skills and the researchers. We should look back in 20, 30, 50 years time and say we were leaders.</p> <p>* Pursue Historic Environment Strategy to cover not just historic Core but environs included</p> <p>* Consider and pursue UNESCO status for the city and its historical environment</p> <p>* Evaluation of projects. Visual, social, environmental & financial impacts. Improve process & contract scrutiny. Lessons learnt. . E.g. CB1 development, Lighting contracts, (Burrell's walk). Cycle schemes on urban approach roads.</p> <p>* Allow additional time and extra costs for evaluation in our planning.</p> <p>* Create an integrated Design Brief tailored to Cambridge character</p> <p>* Clarify or create new posts. Heritage Champion, townscape manager, environmental steward.</p> <p>* Ban double decker buses and tourist buses from the City Centre. Enforce better environmental stewardship.</p>

4	NEIGHBOURHOOD - PEOPLE, SOCIAL IMPACTS , QUALITY OF LIFE
	Neighbourhood. Importance of human scale, green spaces, and informal connectivity. Be able to walk to the shops. Serendipity, Paradise
	Areas of deprivation; we must not make rural ghettos. People want social diversity not social cleansing in the city
	Manage tourist numbers. We are approaching full capacity and need responsible long term tourism strategy. Tourist Tax?
	We must make self contained neighbourhoods, with shops and employment We are at risk of creating dormitory suburbs
	Good place making. Create more green space in built up areas. Council should resist garden grabbing.
5	HOUSING
	Too much student housing. Language schools. Institutional expansion and densification. Want more affordable social housing
	Need an innovative private sector housing model
	Housing needs 'more control. 'Free market view not working'. Address free market developer-led 'small space' houses
	Concern over rise in Air BnB; Concern over private landlords with empty properties
*	Demand 'Use-planning' in planning consent. Encourage & enable Neighbourhood Plans
*	Put more resources in the planning & urban design departments. Better paid and more planners.
6	COUNCILS - MANAGEMENT, PLANNING, DEMOCRACY & REPRESENTATION
	People working in silos. Talking about 'They'. 'No one knows who 'They' is. Technology has made people more remote. You can't talk to decision makers
	Build confidence. There is a lack of trust in planning system. Quality of the Councillors. Who are they representing?
	Create political structures better suited to Greater Cambridge. Too many types of council?
	No Executive Councillor to champion Heritage issues.
	Youth - Where are the younger voices in this? Who is giving their voice?
*	More resources in planning. Support Council to be more robust and have control
*	Put up a website where people can openly log down problems with planning
*	Use the 'four vibrant organisations' (here today) to challenge and look at a route to discuss a vision beyond the Local Plan
*	Communication - we don't value it- we don't fund it enough. Need better consultations. More workshops. More involved in the process earlier
*	Remind people we have a democratically agreed local plan which is being undermined by current development. This has a vision of a compact City and a green belt, community values and a sustainable City.
7	UNIVERSITY & COLLEGES
	Colleges and University perceived as sometimes aloof and secretive. Questioned how they work within the planning system
	University and colleges need to take a collective approach. Change the culture of colleges competing with each other
	Cumulative impact to be recognised. Wish to see stronger sense of responsibility to the City & involve wider community
	The positives - Collegiate systems. 'University with a Town attached'. Each one lucky to have the other
8	BUSINESS
	Need to give small businesses, independent shops etc, not just big businesses, a voice
	Strategy for clusters of companies that need to be boxed together
	Mind the Gap – advance smart technology apps.

9	TRANSPORT
	Cheap public transport. No park and ride charges; Residents parking controls.
	Buses. Revisit assumptions about bus usage. Does it justify a bus based strategy? General dislike of buses- noisy, polluting not 21st century.
	Strong support to consider light rail and underground ideas to deal with exponential growth
	Develop a strategic view of cycling options for Greater Cambridge; Better education of cyclists- especially foreign students
	Ring Road wanted. Revisit relief road at Addenbrookes.
*	Clear analysis of buses - more direction and subsidies. Congestion charging revenue; Work Place Parking Levy
*	Look at light rail ideas for metro & underground across Cambridge. Co-ordinate transport vision groups. Reboot City Deal
*	City Centre capacity study- footfall, cyclists. Medieval streets and narrow bridges.
*	Investigate new pedestrian bridge potential
*	Short term benefits/ gains. Review different ways of using our vehicles. Car sharing. Reduce traffic by 5%
10	FINANCE & FUNDING
	How to extract funding value from growth to then invest in ambitious plans for transport?
*	Charge foreign investors in accommodation
*	Make an international investor survey
*	City Deal is interim funding. Re calibrate City Deal.
*	Tourist levy taxes
*	Business contributions. Change where the Section 106 money goes. (Understand Community Infrastructure levy)
*	Business - look at where value is created. How can we extract value from the growth?
*	A business case is required to invest in planning and strategic design of transport infrastructure. The funding criteria needs to fit the strategic plan - not the other way round - and funding could be sought from the private sector, with a shift in thinking.
11	Blue Sky
	Move ARU to outside Cambridge - Northstowe?
	Move private schools outside Cambridge
	Move University departments to satellite towns
	New concert hall and conference centre 1500 capacity
	Cowpats. Call for cowpats on Cambridge Coats of Arms as KPI of semi rural character. Audience approved...

Note: Over 300 comments were received and available for reference.

Further References

* [2030 Vision papers and report. 2009](#)

**[The Cambridge City Deal Agreement 2014](#)

*** [The current & new \(un-adopted\) Cambridge Local Plan](#)

[South Cambs Local Plan](#)

End. Last updated 10 Oct 16