

Land at East of Boxworth End, Swavesey: High Level Transport Strategy Note

February 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Note sets out the high-level transport strategy for development on Land East of Boxworth End, Swavesey, Cambridgeshire. It has been prepared for Axis Land Partnerships, (ALP) who are promoting the land for allocation in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. At this stage, the development proposals comprise up to 70 dwellings.
- 1.2 The Note briefly sets out the policy context in which promotion of Land East of Boxworth End would be assessed. It then describes the existing and future accessibility of the site by the main modes of transport, along with the travel characteristics of existing residents in the vicinity of the site based on Census 2011 data. A high-level transport strategy for the development is then presented, the focus of which is on promotion of non-car modes of transport.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It notes that:

Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health (paragraph 103).

- 2.2 It advises that, when assessing sites that may be allocated, or specific applications for development:

- (a) *Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;*
- (b) *Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and*
- (c) *Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree (paragraph 108).*

- 2.3 NPPF further advises (at paragraph 110) that, for development proposals, priority should be given first to pedestrian and cycle movements, and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high-quality public transport. However, it also recognises (at paragraph 103) that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

- 2.4 The NPPF's national policy aims are reflected in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan September 2018. Its Policy TI/2 'Planning for Sustainable Travel' notes that:

1. *Development must be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and promote sustainable travel appropriate to its location;*

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2. *Planning permission will only be granted for development likely to give rise to increased travel demands, where the site has (or will attain) sufficient integration and accessibility by walking, cycling or public and community transport, including:*
 - (a) *Provision of safe, direct routes within permeable layouts that facilitate and encourage short distance trips by walking and cycling between home and nearby centres of attraction, and to bus stops or railway stations, to provide real travel choice for some or all of the journey*
 - (b) *Provision of new cycle and walking routes that connect to existing networks, including the wider Rights of Way network, to strengthen connections between villages, Northstowe, Cambridge, market towns, and the wider countryside;*
 - (c) *Protection and improvement of existing cycle and walking routes, including the Rights of Way network, to ensure the effectiveness and amenity of these routes is maintained, including through maintenance, crossings, signposting and waymarking, and, where appropriate, widening and lighting;*
 - (d) *Provision of secure, accessible and convenient cycle parking*
 - (e) *Securing appropriate improvements to public and community transport (including infrastructure requirements) in accordance with the aims of the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan and South Cambridgeshire Community Transport Strategy.*
 3. *Developers will be required to demonstrate they will make adequate provision to mitigate the likely impacts (including cumulative impacts) of their proposal including environmental impacts (such as noise and pollution) and impact on amenity and health. This will be achieved through direct improvements and Section 106 contributions and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), to address transport infrastructure in the wider area including across the district boundary;*
 4. *Developers of 'larger developments' or where a proposal is likely to have 'significant transport implications' will be required to demonstrate they have maximised opportunities for sustainable travel and will make adequate provision to mitigate the likely impacts through provision of a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. All other developments will be required to submit a Transport Statement. Where a Transport Assessment / Statement or Travel Plan is required, a Low Emissions Strategy Statement should be integrated;*
 5. *Travel Plans must have measurable outputs, be related to the aims and objectives in the Local Transport Plan and provide monitoring and enforcement arrangements. Planning obligations may be an appropriate means of securing the provision of some or all of a Travel Plan, including the requirement for an annual monitoring and progress report. Submission of area-wide Travel Plans will be considered in appropriate situations. Outline planning applications are required to submit a framework for the preparation of a Travel Plan.*
- 2.5 The Local Plan also notes, however, that South Cambridgeshire is a predominantly rural district with several relatively isolated villages lacking essential facilities and services to meet day to day needs, meaning the car will remain an essential mode of travel for some.
- 2.6 The key transport policy guidance for new developments from the NPPF and the adopted Local Plan is therefore to reduce the need to travel before then prioritising non-car modes of travel, focussing on accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport. Travel by the private car is at the bottom of the transport-user hierarchy. However, it is recognised that travel choices for rural areas are more limited than those available in urban areas.

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3. Existing and Future Transport Conditions and Characteristics

- 3.1 The site is located about 7.5 miles to the north west of Cambridge City Centre. It has frontage with Bucking Way Road, although there is no vehicular access into the site at present.
- 3.2 The 2011 Census journey to work data on residents near the site indicates a reliance on the private car, with about 78% travelling to work by private car. About 6% walk to work, 3% travel by bus, and 5% cycle. The bus mode share is likely to have increased since the Census, with the opening of the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus after the Census was undertaken in 2011. The main employment destination is Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.
- 3.3 This journey to work data is indicative of the existing transport accessibility of the site, and reflects the Local Plan's observations of the rural nature of the District in which opportunities for travel by non-car mode can be limited.
- 3.4 However, the site does have reasonably good accessibility to key destinations by non-car modes, within footway provision through Swavesey providing non-car access to Swavesey Primary School, Swavesey Village College and a wide range of other local services and facilities that would meet many of the day-to-day needs of local residents. Most of the village is within a one mile walk of the site, so these day-to-day needs could easily be met on foot or cycle, therefore limiting the impact of the development on the wider highway network.
- 3.5 There is also an off-road cycleway alongside Bucking Way Road to the south of Boxworth End that provides a good non-car connection with the nearby Buckingham Way Business Park, which is about 0.9 miles south of the site and which therefore has good pedestrian and cycle accessibility with the site. The Business Park could provide a source of local employment for future residents, and given its non-car accessibility, means that residents would be able to travel to work at the Business Park without the need to use their car.
- 3.6 Land East of Boxworth End would improve the walking and cycling accessibility of the site by the provision of new footways in the vicinity of the site and crossing opportunities. It could also assist with the delivery of traffic calming measures through the village, to improve road safety conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.7 In the wider context, Highways England's A14 improvement between Milton and Ellington is nearing completion (with the section south of Huntingdon already operational since December 2019). A new Local Access Road will run parallel between the Swavesey junction at the Buckingham Way Business Park and Huntingdon Road in Cambridge. This will have a high-quality pedestrian and cycle route alongside it, which would be an extension of the existing shared footway / cycleway along Bucking Way Road south of Swavesey. This means there would be a continuous shared footway / cycleway between the site and key destinations including Bar Hill and its Business Park at about 3.4 miles, Eddington at about 7 miles, West Cambridge at about 8 miles and Cambridge City Centre at about 8.5 miles (travelling distances). These are reasonable distances for regular cyclists, therefore providing further opportunities for the development to promote non-car means of travel.
- 3.8 The site is close to bus stops on Bucking Way Road which are served by the Citi 5 service about every 2 hours during weekdays, linking the site with Bar Hill and Cambridge City Centre. The site is also about 1.4 miles south of the Swavesey stop for the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus, which provides fast and frequent services to Cambridge Science Park and Cambridge City Centre, along with St Ives. This is within a reasonable cycling distance of the site, and there is covered cycle parking available at the CGB stop. The site therefore has good public transport accessibility with Cambridge City Centre and the key employment location of the Cambridge Northern Fringe. The development would investigate improvements to the Citi 5 service to improve its frequency to Swavesey, and the traffic calming measures through the village would improve conditions for cyclists travelling to the CGB stop.

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4. Transport Strategy for Land East of Boxworth End

4.1 The brief review of the transport planning context and existing and future transport conditions indicates that the transport strategy for the site will need to focus on the objectives set out in order below:

- (a) Reduce the need to travel by car;
- (b) Promote walking and cycling with surrounding areas, with the provision of high-quality walking and cycling connections with the rest of the village and Swavesey;
- (c) Encourage public transport for connections with Cambridge and key employment areas in Eddington, West Cambridge and the Northern Fringe.

4.2 High level initiatives and measures to securing the above transport strategy objectives for Boxworth End are described below.

Reduce the Need to Travel by Car

4.3 There are a number of local services and facilities provided within Swavesey that would meet many of the day-to-day needs of future residents. This includes local shops, community facilities and local schools. These are within easy walking and cycling distance of the site, and therefore provide good opportunities for local residents to meet many of their day-to-day needs by non-car modes and reduce their impact on the wider highway network, assisting with an important transport policy aim.

Promote Walking and Cycling

4.4 Improvements would be made to the existing pedestrian and cycle provision. This would be to assist with walking and cycling to the existing shared footway / cycleway south of the village to the Buckingham Way Business Park and the new A14 Local Access Road shared footway / cycleway provision. Improvements would also be to existing provision through the village. Subject to discussions with the highway authority, these improvements could be in the form of new footway provision, new crossing facilities, or traffic calming features to reduce vehicular speeds through the village.

4.5 The development's site access arrangements would include new footways into the site. Appropriate cycle parking will be provided at locations that are safe, secure and covered.

Encourage Public Transport

4.6 The development would assist with the accessibility of the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus through the pedestrian and cycle improvements through the village as described above. The Guided Bus is within a reasonable walking and cycling distance of the site, and provides good opportunities to access key employment areas by non-car means. Improvements to the cycle parking provision at the CGB stop could be made as part of the development proposals.

4.7 The development will also explore with bus operators the potential to increase the frequency of the existing Citi 5 service that connects Swavesey with Bar Hill and Cambridge City Centre.

4.8 To encourage use of the bus, residents would need to be offered bus vouchers for one month's free bus travel.

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5. Access Strategy

- 5.1 A new priority T-junction on Bucking Way Road would form the vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to the site. A preliminary design of this access has been prepared in accordance with highways design guidance, and is shown below.



- 5.2 Within the site, streets will be designed in accordance with the principles of Manual for Streets, meaning the needs of pedestrians and cyclists will be considered from an early stage in the design of the masterplan.

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- 5.3 Car parking provision will be balanced at a level which seeks to deter habitual car use for journeys that could be made by non-car modes, but also recognises likely car ownership levels and the rural character of the area.
- 5.4 The ability to install electronic vehicle charging equipment would be provided for dwellings, to encourage residents to own electric cars. This would seek to address issues related to air quality.

6. Travel Plan

- 6.1 A comprehensive Travel Plan would be required for the development, along with a Travel Plan Co-ordinator. The purpose of the Travel Plan would be to encourage non-car modes of travel. The responsibility for the Travel Plan would rest with the developer and cover a period from before first occupation to at least full occupation, so that the encouragement of non-car modes of travel is maintained throughout the build-out of the development.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This Note sets out the high-level transport strategy for development on Land East of Boxworth End, Swavesey. The emphasis for this strategy is on reducing the need to travel before then prioritising non-car modes of travel, focussing on opportunities for access by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 7.2 With the implementation of the strategy, it is considered that the site is deliverable, accords with national and local transport policy guidance, and that therefore there are no transport nor highways reasons why Land East of Boxworth End, Swavesey should not be allocated for residential development in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.