

Hereford Area Plan Reference Group Meeting

Date: 16th November 2016

Venue: Committee Room, Town Hall Hereford

Draft Meeting notes

Present

Cllr Price, Chair, Herefordshire Council
Cllr Round, Herefordshire Council
Cllr Andrews, Herefordshire Council
Cllr Lloyd-Hayes, Hereford City Council
Steve Kerry, Hereford City Council
Joy Harvey, HVOSS
Georgia Smith, Hereford BID
Bill Bloxsome, Local Nature Partnership
Kevin Singleton, Herefordshire Council
Victoria Eaton, Herefordshire Council
David Shepherd, NMITE
Ade Schofield, Architype/NMITE

Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Richard Gabb, HC
Cllr McEvilly, (HC)
Rob Garner (HNP)
Gareth Blackett (HVOSS)

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- 1.0 Welcome, introductions and apologies.
 - 2.0 Minutes of the last HAP Reference Group Meeting on 14th September 2016 were agreed.
 - 3.0 Presentation from David Shepherd and Ade Schofield on the position so far with the university proposal. (The PowerPoint presentation has been made available for the Reference Group and will be circulated with these minutes).
 - 3.1 Negotiations are ongoing with the Government's Department for Education in respect of funding the project. It is hoped that £25m may be made available. Of this, £7m would be used for buildings in Hereford and £15m for staff, recruitment, students, faculties etc.

- 3.2 A demographic graph of Herefordshire's population structure demonstrated that there is a shortage of younger adults. Around 12,000 to 18,000 people from this age group leave the county each year. Many of these do not return.
- 3.3 It is anticipated that the university will attract 1,600 students to each year group. Of these 10-15% may remain in Hereford after qualification. This, and the 500-600 members of staff required (on a 12 students to 1 staff member ratio), would have a positive influence on the local economy; bringing in more revenue to local businesses, attracting more employers and adding vibrancy to the community. This will help to build a positive future for the county.
- 3.4 DS commented that, so far, there has been good support for the university proposals amongst the local community. PA suggested that working class Herefordians are still not necessarily convinced by the idea. DS: their experience from communications and consultations thus far tells that the community wants to have their own, small university. Locals would like a niche, world class type of university, enabling it to grow and survive in a competitive higher education market. Research has backed this up and has identified that there is a shortage of such establishments in the engineering sector. The degree awarding partner will be Warwick University, so the standards will be high.
- 3.5 The university would be the first new greenfield establishment to be built in England in the last 40 years. To make the project even more sustainable, new employers need to be attracted to this field. The key is to make sure of the employability of graduates at the end of their degrees. This is what the marketplace demands. Nationally, the Government is seeking to improve productivity. NMITE wants to educate engineers of the future.
- 3.6 Why is NMITE different from other higher education establishments? The culture focuses on teaching and the application of innovation. There will be intimate collaboration with industry. Starting afresh means that this relationship can be successfully fostered. Students will graduate with good employability skills, entrepreneurship, business literacy, problem solving skills and innovation. The university would be a not-for-profit, commercially grounded and sustainable organisation, using an open source approach. It will open up the opportunity for others in the higher education sector to learn from NMITE's approach.
- 3.7 The first NMITE chief executive has now been appointed. He is currently in Canada; however from April 2017 he will be based here full time. He has experience of setting up a new university in engineering in Canada. NMITE will be based on a flat structure model, where there are not many different departments.
- 3.8 Talent identification: students will require entry grades of AAB (or IB equivalent). Unlike many engineering degree courses, there will be no maths or physics requirements. NMITE will be looking for good A levels in any of the facilitating subjects. This opens up a lot more of the market. Recruiting will not simply be on A level results, but also on essays, interviews. Prospective students will be asked to

come in for a weekend during the selection process. There will be alternative entry approaches for armed service leavers and apprentices.

- 3.9 Half of the students should be female, to encourage a higher proportion of engineers who are women. The number of female engineers is currently 9%. Employees should encourage a more evenly split balance too, to encourage NMITE applications from women.
- 3.10 Curriculum: a three year accelerated integrated masters in liberal engineering. This will comprise 65% engineering and 35% other topics. It will be taught in a series of blocks or modules, focussing intensively on one element in three week blocks. This will involve looking at real issues and challenges which employers might actually face. A raft of skills will be needed to overcome the problem. There will be no exams. Each block will be assessed as it happens. At the end of the course, each student will have a portfolio of work. Lectures will not take place in the traditional way. The degrees will be validated by the University of Warwick. Over the next few months NMITE will need to show that graduates will have all the knowledge considered necessary to become Chartered Engineers.
- 3.11 Relationship between NMITE and Hereford: The aim is to ensure that the university will be an integrated part of the city. Students will be on campus for 42 weeks of the year. NMITE would want them to integrate into the community and the 'real' world outside academia. University facilities would be scattered throughout the city. As students move inbetween these, they will be spending money locally.
- 3.12 Accommodation for every student will be built in 'colleges'. The reason for this is that there is a shortage of space to build and there would be benefits to learning. Possible options for such development include:
 - Essex Arms (Herefordshire Council owned) Possible flooding issues.
 - Franklin House (Herefordshire Council owned)
 - Gaol Street Car Park (Herefordshire Council owned)
 - Two sites at Rotherwas (Herefordshire Council owned)
 - Bastion Mews (privately owned)
 - Aubrey Street (privately owned)
- 3.13 The university will involve a significant investment. It is a £62m project. It should create a regional engineering centre of excellence. The total leveraged investment in Herefordshire is £560m, and it would add over £120m per annum to the Herefordshire economy.
- 3.14 By 25th November 2016 NMITE should know whether or not Government are going to offer them the funding required. Already over £1m worth of funding has been locally sourced.

- 3.15 JH asked whether there will be a large proportion of the students who come here from overseas? DS: it has been modelled that 10% of the students will be from non-EU countries.
- 3.16 PA: as a group, we need to assume that NMITE will be successful. So how will it be integrated into Hereford? We would like this to be a visionary project which will turn into reality. The HAP will be able to guide its development. AS: The project has involved consultation throughout. Masterplanning is the key.
- 3.17 ML-H: student accommodation: concerns over rising prices and whether students would be able to walk to their colleges. Also, has the fire station been considered as an alternative location for development? DS: students will live in colleges and will not be permitted to have their own cars. It is hoped that cycleways and walking links between the city and Rotherwas will be improved. AS: consultation with a similar college in USA has been helpful in giving NMITE an idea of the scale of development required. Hereford would need 14-15 colleges in and around Hereford. There is a need to integrate the city centre into the campus. Research started by looking at various models for a new university and their advantages and disadvantages. Having campuses outside the city centre results in competition with the city centre, which is not good. The aim is integration and using existing and new buildings and new pathways throughout the city centre, providing many advantages for local businesses.
- 3.18 Teaching spaces: trends show that there are moves towards making a more agile use of space both inside and inbetween buildings. NMITE want to create a flexible set of workshop spaces. See outline masterplan. There are a number of properties which may be appropriate for partnership working; cathedral, courtyard, and existing colleges.
- 3.19 Scale and massing and the impact of new buildings have been considered. The university is likely to include buildings which are 4 – 8 storeys high.
- 3.20 PP: NMITE should move quickly to ensure that it integrates with other projects coming forward across the city.
- 3.21 BB: The Local Nature Partnership would like to talk to NMITE about greenways. The Local Catchment Partnership got funding for retrofitting of SUDS. All the area being considered by NMITE would fall into their study area. NMITE could be included in this. Will a natural/soft engineering approach be addressed in the degree curriculum? DS: yes, in broad terms.
- 3.22 Once the first 1,000 students have been accommodated, then the university will evolve. PA: HAP needs to incorporate NMITE's projects. It is essential that its plans are integrated into other existing and proposed city projects. DS: NMITE does not want to create a university quarter. PA: this message is not getting through to the local community. AS: the location of the colleges will be led by what sites and buildings become available for development. There may be a shortage of sites close to the city centre.

- 3.23 PA: The HAP Reference Group needs to work with NMITE to ensure that the two projects are integrated. Things change so quickly that the group needs to have a good understanding of NMITE's requirements and plan appropriately for them. DS: unfortunately, at this time, NMITE do not have the funds to purchase specific sites. A bid has been made to central government for £25m, in addition to possible money from the European Investment Bank (although with Brexit, this is uncertain). At this time no detailed design work has been undertaken. In January 2017 this will commence, once the Chief Executive and other key members of staff are in place.
- 3.24 KS: the challenge in planning terms is to produce a HAP in the next two years. Such a plan must contain deliverable policies and proposals. How do we integrate NMITE's plans into the HAP? Policies guiding such development will need to be flexible, whilst not sterilising key pieces of land from being used for other forms of development. PA: timescales are critical. We need to set the direction of travel for the future of the city through the HAP, whilst being aligned with the Core Strategy. AS: NMITE would put together a masterplan, but until the land has been acquired this will be difficult. KS: the HAP could contain a policy for the university, and then adopt any future masterplan to implement the HAP policy. PA: allocating land in the HAP is unlikely; therefore criteria based policies to guide the university's development would be needed, perhaps identifying a key primary location.
- 3.25 ML-H: A press release from NMITE would help to create local positivity in the local area. AS: confirmed that public consultations will be held on the masterplan when it is produced. KS: when the HAP goes through its public consultation procedures, it would be good to have representatives from NMITE present too.
- 3.26 AS: NMITE can provide information regarding the land requirements per college as a starting point. DS: the total amount of space needed is already known and can be broken down into the various uses of the university.
- 3.27 PA: what happens once funding for the university has been secured? There is a need to ensure that NMITE and HAP timescales match up. DS: A planning application for a change of use of the Franklin Barns building has now been submitted. Subsequently there will be applications made to build on the Essex Arms site, Rotherwas shell store and land adjacent, Gaol Street and other sites (in that order).
- 3.28 ML-H: infrastructure requirements such as hospitals and medical care for the student population will need to be considered. Will these be located on-site? The local GP practices are full. DS: conversations have been held with the commissioning group and the hospital, but no conclusions have been reached.
- 3.29 PA: If funding for NMITE is successful, there will need to be more communication and partnership working in the future, in order to achieve the type of development desired for the city. NMITE is wished every success in sourcing funding.
- 3.30 JH: it would be beneficial if the university made a special effort to integrate ex-service people (both locally and from elsewhere). DS: NMITE can investigate a possible model for a degree which would work for ex-service people.

- 3.31 PP: accommodation will be demanded quickly. How does the HAP integrate with NMITE within the timescales? DS: August 2019 is when the first tranche of accommodation is needed. It is anticipated that construction will begin in 2018. PP: we would want NMITE to attend future HAP reference group meetings as necessary. Should Hereford Civic Society be asked to attend meetings too? Perhaps at a later date.
- 4.0 Sustainability Appraisal update from KS: the draft SA Scoping Report has been produced by LUC and is currently out for statutory consultation, the period of which ends on 9th December 2016.
- 5.0 Hereford Area Plan boundary and Holmer & Shelwick Parish Council update from KS. KS will attend a H&SPC meeting next week (23.11.16) to discuss this matter and ask them to attend future HAP Reference Group meetings. AR: has a concern that a H&S neighbourhood development plan may not get off the ground. It has taken a long time thus far and has not commenced. If they go down the NDP route, they may not want their parish to be incorporated into the HAP boundary. AR: has spread the word that they really do need to attend Ref Group meetings to ensure that they have an input into matters which are likely to directly affect them. PP: a decision on whether or not to be in the HAP by H&SPC as soon as possible. KS was asked to emphasise the need for them to be included and involved and to impress upon them that a decision needs to be made.
- 6.0 AOB. KS: Hereford Transport Package (relief road and sustainable transport measures) project consultations are to take place soon. If these are to be around the same time as the HAP Issues & Options consultation, the two do not need to cause any confusion amongst the public. Perhaps a presentation to the HAP Ref Group on the HTP would be a good idea. WSP consultants are developing the HTP programme of works. PP: yes, this would be very useful. PP: attended a LEP meeting recently where the strategic importance of the A49 to Shropshire and Wales was discussed, just as it is here. It is crucial for local businesses; education etc. and its wider importance to the north should not be forgotten.

End of meeting