

11.11.2019

**CNFE Feedback – November 2019 – on AAP Strategic Framework draft plan**

Dear Matt Paterson and team,

Thank you for sharing your team's emerging thoughts on the draft NEC Spatial Framework (SF). We have carried out a review of this within our CNFE Team and would offer comments as set out below. Many of these points were recently discussed with Matt Paterson, when we met him on the 17<sup>th</sup> October, and so the purpose of this note is to formalise our comments so that they can be duly considered as part of your on-going work.

In principle, we are in broad agreement with the intent of what is being shown within the SF. We feel it will serve as an important tool for guiding how development might come forward within the AAP in a comprehensive and coherent manner.

We do have a number of specific concerns about the SF plan which I'd like to share with you. Therefore, below we have summarised our thoughts and feedback with regard to the emerging AAP SF plan. In line with the feedback below, and as suggested when we met Matt, we've suggested some minor modifications to the current draft plan for your consideration.

1. **Superblocks:** we don't think it is necessary for the SF to show such a detailed super-block layout. We suggest simply showing the primary connections at this stage and leaving flexibility in the detailed block layout.
2. **Diagonal route:** The draft layout included a long diagonal route connecting the link from Milton and Cambridge Science Park, to the proposed high street and towards Cambridge North Station. Whilst we recognise that it will be important for the SF to indicate the need to provide a high-quality route strategic link between these points, we feel there should be flexibility in the exact orientation of this route. We'd also note that the general N-S block structure emerging from the design workshops didn't incorporate a direct diagonal route and that doing so would have had further implications for the wider block structure. We'd suggest that instead of a specific route, the plan might incorporate an arrow that indicates the broad route and/or policy wording to state the importance of a connection between points A and B, or similar.
3. **Open spaces:** We recognise that this scheme is unlikely to be able to support the quantum of open space that would usually be expected under Local Plan policy, and that instead there will be a need to compensate for lower provision with higher-quality, multi-functional spaces within the scheme. However, until furthermore detailed masterplanning has been carried out, we can't be confident of the exact location and shape of large open spaces. The



issue with the plan as suggested that stakeholders (including Councillors) may have the (understandable) expectation that provision, such as the large triangular park, will be provided exactly in that manner. If detailed masterplanning determines that a different approach is more desirable, we may then encounter objections on the basis that we are changing the adopted SF. Instead, our view is that it is right for the SF to show strategic green infrastructure, where there is a greater level of certainty that it will be delivered in that manner such as the N-S primary green corridor, the E-W secondary green corridor and the buffer treatment on the A14 edge. Supporting policy wording could then support the strategic infrastructure requirement by reinforcing the intention to provide high quality multi-functional space in preference to standard local plan requirements, and that individual planning applications will be expected to provide green/blue infrastructure strategies to demonstrate how open space and recreation will be adequately provided.

4. **Education:** Whilst we recognise and support the principle that on-site provision will need to be made, at this stage there appears to be some uncertainty about how many schools will be required, what format (i.e. primary/secondary/all through) they will be, and where and when they will be delivered. It's also unclear to us that the entire educational provision across the AAP should be provided exclusively on the CNFE site. In the absence of this information it doesn't feel appropriate to label the SF as currently shown. Supporting policy wording could instead be used to explain that at the time of the AAP adoption it is considered likely that 2 primary schools and 1 all-through primary/secondary/sixth form will be required on the CNFE site, but that individual planning applications will be required to ultimately demonstrate how provision will be made (including phasing).
5. **High Street:** the current format appears quite detailed and prescriptive, and we would instead suggest that a simple linear zone be shown as an area of consideration for the new district centre/high street. Supporting policy wording could then state that individual planning applications will be required to demonstrate what provision is considered appropriate and how and when it will be delivered. The wording might provide some guidance on the types and quantum of space that it considers appropriate at this stage, but again, that might be further tested through a Town Centre Impact Appraisal at the appropriate time (planning application).
6. **Missing elements:** We would like to suggest the following elements, which might be useful to add to the SF:
  - Potential routes for aggregates
  - Zone for industrial (Sidings – Brookgate)
7. **Heights and densities:** we are keen to ensure that the AAP doesn't state fixed densities (units/ha), given that there will not be an acceptable level of certainty until detailed design elements of the various phases are undertaken (post-AAP adoption). In order to have

confidence in the SF working for us (rather than us coming up against it) we would advocate the SF setting a minimum target for housing, supported by a set of transect plans.

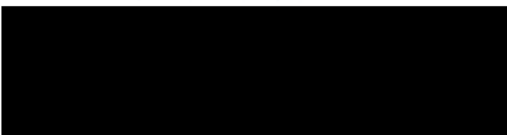
Through initial, detailed masterplanning at HIF Stage (dating back to December 2018), URBED have calculated that the following target densities would be acceptable for each transect:

- High density: 260dph
- Medium-high density: 180dph
- Medium Density: 120dph
- Regular density: 70dph
- Over other uses (i.e. mix use blocks): 160dph
- (Average density of 180 dph)

8. **Parking:** We would also note that parking should be set at 0.2 spaces per unit instead of 0.5 per unit for residential, and assumed to take the format of 'car barns' rather than being spread as overall GFA at ground floor. In addition to the 0.2 spaces per unit, we'd suggest making some further parking allowance to support mixed uses such as offices and hotel facilities. This is currently set at a ratio of 1:1,000 sq ft – so approximately 500 car parking spaces for commercial space

9. **Density plan:** We suggest that another possible way of illustrating density across the scheme is by using a "Density Measure" plan, and we have attached to this document our URBED example of this type of plan produced for the HIF submission. A Density Measure plan can provide adequate certainty while accepting that there needs to be flexibility through detailed masterplanning. If you think this would be a reasonable way to show it we'd be happy to provide any further input in terms of detail.

Yours sincerely,



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**for and on behalf of URBED (Urbanism, Environment and Design) Ltd.**

