

University of West of England April/May Consultation Events Summary Feedback Report

Introduction:

As part of the consultation process for the masterplanning of the new UWE Campus, a series of initial workshop events took place during the week of Monday 27 April 2009.

Three workshops were held for staff and students on Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 April, at the Farmhouse, on the newly acquired Hewlett Packard land. A further Student Voices event was held on the Frenchay campus on Wednesday 29 April. This was followed by a further workshop for external stakeholders also held at the Farmhouse on Friday 1 May.

The aim of these initial workshops was to introduce the New Campus project and the masterplanning team and to explain the context and scope of the project. It also provided an opportunity for the team to test their own interpretation of the key issues facing UWE and to invite staff, students and external stakeholders to feed back on any additional issues at this early stage in the masterplanning work.

At each workshop there were various members of the masterplanning team advising on their particular areas of responsibility. These included representatives from:

- Stride Treglown – masterplanning and design
- Alder King – strategic and town planning
- Colin Buchanan – wider transportation issues (beyond the site)
- Hoare Lee – sustainability
- Hyder – transportation issues (within the site)
- Hyder – environmental

These workshops form part of the build up to a full programme of consultation events, which will run over the coming months. Through this process the University wishes to engage and involve staff and students plus the local community in shaping the future plans for the whole campus. The consultation events are part of a wider communications exercise, including using a dedicated web site, e-communications, University publications and public leaflets, to ensure that anyone interested knows what is going on and can respond to and be part of ongoing discussions as the masterplanning project progresses.

Internal Workshops:

Invitees

Invitations to the three workshops were sent out via the Deputy Vice Chancellor's office to all campuses, faculties and departments at UWE to ensure a good cross section of attendance from the University, with representatives from each faculty covering academic and non-academic staff. Similarly invites were sent out via the Students Union to get representation from a cross section of students.

A total of 102 staff and students attended over the three sessions.

Event format

The workshops began with an introduction from the Deputy Vice Chancellor/Director of Facilities who explained the context of the masterplan, the project brief, methodology and approach. This was followed by a presentation from the lead masterplanners to show the key findings of the early site analysis work, which has looked at issues around the environment, landscape, built fabric, transport, services and utilities and town planning. (see *Appendix C*)

The team then posed a series of questions to test their own interpretation of the key issues facing UWE and the masterplan project. Attendees were invited to present their own thoughts to ensure that the team is aware of the full set of issues from all the constituent parts of the University.

Through a series of three structured group discussion sessions, staff and students were first asked to comment on what they felt helped to make a successful place and a good university campus. They were then asked to relate this to the Frenchay site by identifying, on site plans, what they felt were the positive and negative attributes of the campus and then what they felt was missing or they would most like to change. The workshop finished with a session on future thinking around possible challenges to delivering a single campus masterplan, how the delivery of education, teaching and learning spaces might change in the future and ideas around delivering sustainable development at the campus.

‘Student Voices’ event:

Invitees

A further 24 students took part in the Student Voices event on Wednesday, 29 May 2009. This is a regular forum for canvassing students’ views on various topical issues through facilitated round table discussions. Recruiting participants and the running of the event was organised through the Department of Student Services.

Event format

A group of students were invited to respond to the same series of Campus questions posed at the earlier three internal workshops. This invited feedback around their experience of the Frenchay campus and how they would like to see the campus improved. Students worked in small facilitated discussion groups and their feedback was recorded by facilitators.

External key stakeholders’ workshop

Invitees

In conjunction with UWE, South Gloucestershire Council and the masterplanning team a list of key stakeholders was compiled to represent constituent parts of the local community. This included local councillors and council officers, service providers including police and health trusts, a representative from the adjacent residents’ association, utilities and local transport representatives as well as other organisations with an interest in the site including representatives of commercial developers bringing forward planning proposals on neighbouring sites.

From a database of approximately 90 names a total of 25 individuals participated in the stakeholder event on 1 May 2009. Others who could not attend asked to be kept informed. Attendees included representation from South Gloucestershire and Bristol City Councils, Avon & Somerset Police, GWE Business West, Avon Wildlife Trust, First Bus, Redrow and Crest, amongst other organisations and groups with an interest in the site.

Event format

On arrival stakeholders were encouraged to view the exhibition boards and talk informally to members of the University and the project team.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor began by introducing the New Campus proposals and gave an overview presentation on the project from a UWE perspective (see *Appendix A*). Attendees were then taken on a short guided bus tour around the Frenchay campus and the newly acquired Hewlett Packard site so that individuals unfamiliar with the area could better understand the context of the proposed development site and get an initial feel for the environment in which the New Campus would be situated.

The group then reassembled for a formal presentation session. This began with an overview from South Gloucestershire Council of the wider transport and infrastructure proposals for the area (see *Appendix B*) The UWE masterplanning team then presented the same summary of the initial site analysis report which had been given at the internal workshops (see *Appendix C*).

The meeting was then opened up to general questions and answers before attendees were divided into smaller topic discussion groups. Groups debated issues around transport & parking, perceptions of UWE/impact on the wider area, integration with the wider community and physical implications of a consolidated campus. Each group briefly fed back their key points in a plenary session and individuals were invited to sign up if they were interested in continuing to work through issues as part of ongoing discussion forums/task groups.

Consultation Feedback:

Consultation responses – encouraging dialogue

The aim of the workshops was to initiate dialogue and provide an opportunity for feedback and creative input from a small number of representatives both internally and externally at an early stage in the masterplanning process. Feedback will help identify any key issues which should be borne in mind as the development progresses and inform the next 'emerging strategic options' stage of the project.

Feedback from the internal workshops

After each discussion session there were plenary sessions with verbal feedback from groups. Full responses were provided through a combination of written feedback forms and annotated large-scale site plans. (*For all groups' responses and suggestions see Appendix D*).

Discussion session 1 - What makes a good place and a good university?

Ideas identified including having a place that you want to visit that is welcoming, memorable and has a sense of identity, self confidence and pride. On a practical side people mentioned aspects such as good transport links, ease of access and positive connections to the wider community. There should good quality buildings and facilities with areas well organised and designed on a human scale. They want to see buildings set within a pleasant environment with a range of green and landscaped social and recreational spaces with quiet areas as well as larger more formal meeting or sporting areas. People want to feel safe and secure, to be in a place for people not cars with good pedestrian links outdoors and under cover and to be able to find their way around easily

Translating these ideas across to a University setting they want teaching, learning and study to be at the heart of the campus with buildings fit for purpose but durable and adaptable in the future. There needs to be an appropriate and well designed range of teaching spaces and meeting/conference rooms with good equipment and support services. There was general support for a clear focal point, possibly a hub and spoke model, plus a good well serviced central reception area. Again there was a strong desire for easy access to and from the campus and around the site on foot and by public transport. There were suggestions for widening community use through better access and provision of more amenities and facilities available throughout evenings and weekends.

Discussion session 2 – Campus thoughts

Staff and students were invited to apply this thinking to their experience of the Frenchay campus and to annotate large scale site plans with their ideas.

There was general agreement that at present Frenchay offers a poor arrival experience with little sense of welcome or identity. Main reception is hard to find and visitors have difficulty finding their way and moving around the campus, which is compounded by poor signage. There were ideas

around creating a real focal heart to the campus which should be easy to find and access from a main entrance.

Transport was another key theme. Respondee want to see improvements in transport connections for pedestrians, cyclists and car users. This includes more frequent bus services to/from the campus, to nearby rail stations and into the city centre, especially in the evenings and at weekends, plus better routes for cyclists. Difficulty with parking on site was raised as an issue as well as the location and management of car parks.

There was a strong desire to improve the range and choice of facilities and amenities on site especially in the evenings and at weekends and to what extent these could be shared with the wider community. There was discussion around the best location of such amenities, particularly the student union centre/spaces. There was a long wish list of possible amenities ranging from a swimming pool and dedicated sports facilities to general services such as commercial shops, cafes/restaurants, post office, hairdresser etc. This was particularly raised by students who currently live on site and have little access to any amenities outside core hours. People also wanted a range of essential services such as a doctor's surgery, dentist and pharmacy that could be made available to the wider community. There was also discussion around having a major new Arts/Performing Arts Centre with linked exhibition space which could also be a new attraction for the wider area.

Staff and students wanted better provision and availability of suitably-sized meeting/teaching rooms which could be used more flexibly. Ideas included a wish by many staff to have individual rooms through to larger multi-use spaces which could also be used for conferences. There should be a central booking system for both meeting rooms and support services.

There was discussion around the potential to use buildings and resources more effectively especially as it is clear that not everyone will have new purpose built accommodation. There were ideas around adapting and refurbishing existing buildings to help reduce the amount of new build required and how central management and booking of spaces/services could increase efficiency.

There were many suggestions for improving the quality of the built environment and the landscape. These included having one or two new iconic buildings and generally improving the quality of the whole built environment and remodelling the landscape to include a range of formal and informal spaces for both sports and recreation, especially in the summer months. Specific comments were around having some quiet more private spaces, specific features such as orchards and scented gardens, ponds/lakes for wildlife and looking at incorporating public art.

Discussion session 3 – Future Themes

Staff and students were invited to broaden their thinking around three topics. Firstly, the main challenges to delivering a single campus masterplan, secondly how education, teaching and learning might change in the future and finally ideas around delivering sustainable development.

Issues raised in relation to the challenges of delivering a one campus masterplan ranged from external factors such as affordability, timescale and securing planning permission through to more internal matters such as managing the culture and integration of departments and faculties, meeting expectations and maintaining morale throughout the project. On the practical side there was uncertainty about how to future-proof/build in flexibility, managing issues around transport and car parking and ways of encouraging wider access and shared use with the local community.

The second question was around future changes in education and what impact this will have on space requirements. Ideas put forward included the likelihood of more distance learning, short courses, CPD provision, out of term courses and widening participation which would affect use of facilities and demands for academic time. There will be increasing use of technology in terms of

video conferencing, wifi, streaming, online/virtual teaching etc and less reliance on traditional forms of teaching and learning methods and facilities though some felt that lecturer/student human contact remained important.

It was felt that there may be a reduction in full time undergraduate students and uncertainty regarding international students but more vocational skills would be required and a need to be more customer focused. There was also the comment that students are likely to be looking for a whole life experience combining teaching and social aspects.

The final question was around ideas for delivering sustainable development. Ideas included looking at alternative and renewable energy sources from wind and solar power to biomass boilers and heat pumps as well as making buildings more efficient especially in terms of using the latest technology for heating and ventilation. It was suggested that the university should encourage users of the campus to be more sustainable in their modes of transport and ensure the new campus ties into the strategic bus, cycling and walking networks. It should look at being more flexible in the use of time e.g. outside of current hours/weeks and encouraging distance and blended learning. There were also fundamental issues raised such as the benefit of reusing existing buildings when in the long term new build could be more efficient.

Responses from the **Student Voices event** to the *Campus Thoughts* questions were very similar.

Students strongly supported the general wish for more choice and better provision of amenities, including evenings and weekends. Additional facilities or amenities identified included provision for childcare including for older children and a play area for parents to use when dropping off work or collecting books. A physiotherapy facility was suggested in addition to doctor's surgery, dentist and pharmacy. Also a Muslim prayer facility plus other amenities such as hairdresser and a pub not run by the student union and open to wider community use.

In terms of parking and access on site there were a number of requests for more parking either in a multi-storey or underground and for a short stay parking area for students dropping off assignments/work. Several people mentioned the need for better bus and cycle routes both to/from and through the campus and more facilities for cyclists. Students also mentioned concern around safety and security especially after hours and in more remote areas such as car park 20, plus possibly a dedicated parking /access for nursing students who need to be able to get to/from placements on time.

There were several detailed comments about improving shared resources such as IT services, a request for wireless access across the site and generally better library facilities both centrally and by faculty.

Generally there seemed to be support for wider community integration and shared use of greater facilities and amenities but with comments about how this would work and making sure that UWE/local community does not become an 'us and them' situation.

External Stakeholder Workshop

After the introduction, bus tour and main presentations a general Q&A session was held with all those attending invited to field topics of interest or concern before attendees took part in smaller topic related discussion groups. (See *Appendix F for details of the Q&A session and Appendix G for feedback from the topic discussion groups*)

Summary of key issues raised at the general Q&A session included:

Transport/Access

- Clarification re. the nature/provision of the proposed BRT transport system

- Possibility of encouraging heavy rail use including gaining access to Abbey Wood Railway station through the MOD site

Community facilities

- Opportunities around opening up the campus to the wider community
- Safety and security of staff and students and access issues if the wider public will be coming onto campus to use facilities

Integration with other developments and the wider community

- Need for more integration with adjacent development sites nearby, particularly Redrow and Crest sites
- Need to look at the bigger picture surrounding the impact of the future campus and achieving greater connectivity with the wider area including existing communities such as Lockleaze
- Better integration of the proposed Enterprise Park and the UWE One Campus – e.g shared landscape strategy
- Potential to take a step back and look at a review of allocation and land use across neighbouring sites e.g best location for sporting facilities

Parking

- Dealing with possible implications of an increase in daily influx of student/staff numbers and likely increase in student accommodation on the Frenchay site
- Parking issues following closure of car park 20 - how this will be managed as problems for local residential areas at present

Other

- Scope for a new Arts Centre/community facilities – how is this likely to work in practice? How does UWE perceive the Arts Centre?

Following the Q&A session, attendees split into smaller focus groups to discuss four key areas, highlighted by the project team to delve deeper into key issues and provide more considered input to the team.

Group discussion topics - summary of feedback and issues raised:

1.) Transport & Parking

- How do we make transit more efficient for students and residents?
- Consideration needs to be given to timetables and improvement of the bus services, particularly given that University term times have peaks and link services are not always on convenient days and at times required by the public.
- The bus station needs to be more efficient and higher profile. When deciding where to build consider whether this is for UWE or for the community.
- What would be the most effective transport route – through or alongside the campus? How do we raise the geometric issue point D? Could it link to the BRT route?
- S106 monies will provide some solutions but with falling lands values what will be the viability to provide S106 monies in the recession.
- Proper car park management is required. Consider the concept of parking at the fringes and only providing access to UWE centre for pedestrians, cyclists or buses.

2.) What are perceptions of UWE and its impact on the wider area?

Positive perceptions of the Frenchay Campus

- Contemporary design is a good thing
- Safe and secure
- Good mix of students who also bring diversity to our population

- Seen as a learning hub
- Wealth generation and learning heart at the centre of South Gloucestershire
- UWE clearly wants to be a strong part of the area

Negative perceptions of the Frenchay Campus:

- Negative effect in the wider community: parking, anti-social behaviour, multi-occupancy homes
- UWE lacks presence and focus
- Incremental growth has created an illegible environment
- Lack of movement or connectivity across the site and beyond
- University looks in on itself physically and psychologically – wider links with the community are needed.

How could these be improved?

- Better gateway presence needed
- Far greater transport connections are required, particularly across the ring road and to Redrow site and Lockleaze in the south
- Nearby development opportunities need to be acknowledged: Redrow, Harry Stoke, Cycle City route to parkway etc.
- Need to create a better offer: pubs, arts, theatre etc.
- Better integration with Stoke Gifford is needed
- Maintain an enhanced identity through consistent public realm design

3.) *How could Frenchay Campus be better integrated with the wider community?*

- Psychological leap needed to decide whether this is an open campus that invites the wider community in or not.
- The expanded campus site will be impossible to secure therefore good urban design principles need to be applied to create secure 'streets' and spaces.
- Opportunity to provide cultural, sport and evening uses that invite the wider community into the site 24/7 365 days a year.

4.) *What are the physical implications of a consolidated campus, such as impact on character of the area, design, visual considerations, landscape, ecology, drainage, etc.?*

- The ecological constraints will need to be taken into account before a masterplan is finalised as wildlife corridors/green infrastructure need to be planned in at the outset, and need to link with existing and planned corridors throughout the proposed development area.
- There are opportunities for access by the wider community
- Sustainability design principles should be used to enhance the existing and planned development – particularly critical re water run off
- Consider reducing the building footprint and building higher instead?
- Give consideration to the quality of footpaths and particularly lighting
- Strategic review for the whole site needed to look at links to wider area, species and habitat and bio-diversity corridors
- Secure by design principles should be borne in mind
- Opportunities for strategic movement
- Ideas for location for Centre, but what is the role of the centre in this area of the north fringe?
- Further constraints, relating to development on adjacent sites, will emerge over time.

Next steps:

The Initial Site Analysis report and feedback from the initial round of consultation events will help to inform the next stage in the masterplanning process. Those who were not able to take part in the

initial workshops can contribute their ideas through the new website www.uwewcampus.com. This includes background information, news and ways of giving feedback including an on line discussion forum. Regular updates will allow individuals to follow the masterplanning process as it evolves through to the autumn.

Arising from the external workshop there was interest from stakeholders in setting up some specific task groups for further ongoing discussion and liaison alongside the programme of consultation events. These include a group to look at transport, access and parking, a second group involving adjacent landowners to look at the impact on the wider community and possibly a third to explore green infrastructure and sustainability. Initially these groups will be facilitated by Alder King and involve various members of the masterplanning team as appropriate.

A further round of consultation events will be held in June, where internal and external stakeholders will be able to see how the masterplanning team has responded to issues raised at the first workshops and invited to comment on the emerging strategic options. A preferred option will then be chosen by the UWE Board of Governors in July.

Over the summer the team will then continue to work up this preferred option ready for a further round of public consultation on the emerging draft masterplan in July and again in October. Once the Governors have considered the draft masterplan, the Concept Statement will be submitted to South Gloucestershire Council. This will be followed by the start of the formal planning process which will be subject to further consultation and discussion.

Feedback from all the consultation activities will form part of a Statement of Community Involvement which will accompany a future planning submission.

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Deputy Vice Chancellor's Introduction
- Appendix B - Wider transport presentation
- Appendix C - Masterplanning team presentation
- Appendix D - Internal workshops groups' discussion feedback and annotated site plans
- Appendix E - Student Voices event feedback
- Appendix F - External workshop Q&A session
- Appendix G - External workshop – topic groups' discussions