

## Cambridge City Council

# Planning - Pre-Application Developer Presentations

**Date:** Friday, 27 September 2019

**Time:** 11.15 am

**Venue:** Committee Room 1 & 2, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ

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### Agenda

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Pre-Application Briefing by the Developer - Whittle II Laboratory, University Site, West Cambridge

### The Proposal and site context

The pre application proposal is for the reconfiguration and extension of the existing Whittle Laboratory. The proposed new extension will have four levels of accommodation and will provide approximately 3,000 sq m of footprint. The development is being promoted now because of recently awarded government funding.

The pre application site is situated within the existing Whittle Laboratory on the eastern side of JJ Thomson Avenue. It falls within the 'JJ Thomson Avenue Character Area' within the latest version of the draft Design Guide to accompany the West Cambridge outline application.

The site is partially visible from Madingley Road, although a substantial tree belt divides the two. To the east is the University's Park and Cycle facility and to the south is the University Computer Laboratory.

## Planning History and policy context

The proposed Whittle extension is situated within the West Cambridge Site, which is a major new academic development undertaken by the University of Cambridge. The campus, which is partially built out, currently accommodates academic and some commercial research for physical sciences and technology.

To date, the West Cambridge Site has been partially built out under the framework of the extant masterplan from 1999. Around 100,000 sq m remains to be constructed under the 1999 outline permission. Most of the western side of the West Cambridge site is still vacant plots.

The West Cambridge Site has been slow to develop. Perceptions of the site include concerns over remoteness, isolation, lack of social life, high car dependency and lack of character. There is a general lack of activity on site and external spaces tend to be car dominated. The site suffers from a lack of facilities, although the sports centre has helped start to readdress this issue in recent years. The new shared facilities hub is also currently under construction and will be a step change in facilities for the campus.

The eastern side of the campus has been built out since 2000, with significant buildings including Physics of Medicine and the Broers building. The Whittle Laboratory itself was extended in 2010 (10/0822/FUL) totalling around 500 sq m. This was submitted as a full planning application (not reserved matters) because the Whittle Laboratory was not included within the 1999 masterplan.

The West Cambridge Site is a designated area of major change within the Cambridge Local Plan (2018), policy 19. Policy 19 states that any densification on the site that results in a *significant increase*, over that already approved, will be supported, provided that a revised masterplan supporting an outline planning application is submitted that takes an integrated and comprehensive approach to the provision and distribution of uses.

An outline planning application (16/1134/OUT) was submitted in June 2016 for a new masterplan for the West Cambridge site. It seeks permission for up to 383,300m<sup>2</sup> of development comprising academic

and commercial/research institute floorspace and other ancillary uses.

The outline application remains undetermined because an adequate transport mitigation package has not yet been agreed. The key issue of contention being the development's relationship with, and contribution to, the strategic Cambourne to Cambridge transport scheme. The originally submitted application has also been significantly amended in terms of overall building heights, the drainage strategy, sustainability approach, approach to environmental matters and proposed modifications to existing streets within the campus.

Since submission of the new outline masterplan in 2016, the Council has approved three new buildings at West Cambridge: the new Cavendish III laboratory; the shared facilities hub and the new Civil Engineering Building. These developments came forward as separate full planning applications.

### **Areas of focus**

The key issues for the Whittle pre application scheme are:

- Compliance with the parameter plans and Design Guide for the emerging West Cambridge outline application.
- Design and appearance in context.
- Active frontages and contribution to wider public realm.
- Landscape strategy.
- Environmental impacts and amenity.
- Drainage approach.
- Servicing and access.
- Cycle parking strategy.
- Inclusive access.
- Public Art.

### **Councillor attendance**

Whilst any subsequent planning application relating to this site will be determined by the Planning Committee, all Councillors are invited to attend and take part in this pre-application developer presentation.

### **Purpose of the meeting**

These meetings allow developers an early opportunity to present proposals for future planning applications to elected members of the Council.

The process allows Councillors to feed into the process at an early stage and raise any questions or concerns that can then be addressed by the developer prior to a formal planning application being submitted.

Whilst the meetings will be held in public, they do not form part of the formal decision making process. All planning applications will be determined in line with formal processes as adopted by Cambridge City Council.

### **Format of the Meeting**

For each Briefing:

- Introduction by the Head of Planning Services or a Senior Planning Officer – up to 10 minutes
- Presentation by the developer of the proposal – up to 30 minutes
- Opportunity for Members to ask questions, raise issues, seek clarification, comment on the apparent positive and less positive aspects of the proposal – up to 40 minutes

During this part of the meeting it is important that Councillors who may ultimately make the decision on any subsequent planning application do not feel unduly constrained by what they can ask or raise. However they should avoid expressing views that might give any appearance that they are approaching the proposal with a closed mind. The discussion should not be used for negotiations with the developer. These should take place with officers separately from the meeting. Members of the public must refrain from entering into the discussion at the meeting.

- Summing up – up to 10 minutes

A Planning Department representative will take notes of the meeting, which will be a summary of the proceedings. Nothing said by Councillors at the meeting will in any way be binding on the Committee that subsequently determines the application. The notes will be uploaded to the City Council's website upon completion.

## Planning - Pre-Application Developer Presentations Members and Ward Members

### Information for the public

The public may record (e.g. film, audio, tweet, blog) meetings which are open to the public. For details go to:

[www.cambridge.gov.uk/have-your-say-at-committee-meetings](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/have-your-say-at-committee-meetings)

For full information about committee meetings, committee reports, councillors and the democratic process:

- Website: <http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk>
- Email: [democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk)
- Phone: 01223 457000