

Cambridge City Council

Planning - Pre-Application Developer Presentations

Date: Thursday, 11 May 2023

Time: 9.30 am

Venue: via Microsoft Teams

Contact: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457000

Agenda

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Pre-Application Briefing by the Developer - Grafton Centre (Pages 7 - 12)
Approx: 9:30 am – 11:00 am

Purpose of Briefing:

The purpose of this briefing note is to advise Members of a forthcoming full application that proposes the following to the Grafton Centre:

- i) Demolition of 11-12 Burleigh Street and Abbeygate House,
- ii) part demolition and alterations to the Grafton Centre, removal of existing facades, erection of new floorspace for life science use, new and replacement façades and shopfronts, provision of terraces at fourth floor level, installation of plant and enclosures,
- iii) redevelopment of existing bus turning head and redundant service area to provide new hotel and leisure quarter,
- iv) new pedestrian access route from Christchurch Street to Burleigh Street, provision of cycle parking spaces, public realm and landscape improvements,
- v) highway works to East Road providing new bus stops, pedestrian and cycle routes; and
- vi) other associated works.

Site Context:

The site is the Grafton Centre in Cambridge. A copy of the location plan showing the extent of the pre-application enquiry (red) and the remaining land under the ownership of the applicant but not part of this pre-application enquiry (blue) is provided in appendix 1. In terms of constraints and policies, the following are of particular note:

- The site lies immediately adjacent to three conservation areas and several listed and locally listed buildings (see appendix 2).
- The Cambridge Local Plan (2018) allocates the site as an Area of Major Change through Policy 12. This allocates capacity for additional retail and leisure floorspace at the Grafton Centre.
- In conjunction with the above, there is a Grafton Area Masterplan and Guidance Supplementary Planning Document which is relevant and covers the site, as well as some of the land outside of the applicant's ownership. The connectivity map is shown in appendix 3.
- The Cambridge Local Plan Policies 6 and 11 identifies that the site is within the Cambridge City Centre boundary and much of the frontages within and outside the Grafton Centre are identified as Primary Shopping Frontages within the Primary Shopping Area. These policies generally resist the loss of retail to non-centre uses.
- The above policies are carried forward in the emerging draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Proposal Description:

The proposals seek to repurpose the Grafton Centre from a solely retail/ leisure destination to a mix of life sciences (research and development), hotel and retail/ leisure. The proposal would include substantial works to the public realm around much of the site too.

The Applicant is We Are Pioneer Group Ltd. A breakdown of the anticipated floor schedule of the proposed development is provided in appendix 3.

Background:

The proposals are at pre-application stage. A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) was agreed between the applicants and GCSP in November. The PPA includes an estimated project timetable with pre-application discussions extending into April/ May 2023 with final submission of a planning application in May/ June 2023.

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/6890/local-plan-2018.pdf>
<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/grafon-area-of-major-change-masterplan-and-guidance-spd>

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

If you are interested in observing the meeting, please contact Democratic Services 2 working days in advance of the meeting so that joining details for the meeting can be sent to you. This meeting will be ran online but will not be livestreamed.

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