

Cambridge City Council

Planning - Pre-Application Developer Presentations

Date: Wednesday, 15 January 2025

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

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Agenda

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Pre-Application Briefing by the Developer -
Cambridge Retail Park
Approx: 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Member Briefing/Public Meeting Note	
Site address:	Cambridge Retail Park, Cambridge, Newmarket Road
Prepared by:	Dean Scrivener
Meeting Date:	15 th January 2025
Time:	10:00am – 11:30am (approx.)
Venue:	Online via Teams



Purpose of Briefing:

The purpose of this meeting is to give Members and the public an insight into the initial proposals for the redevelopment of the Cambridge Retail Park (CRP) site. The first intention is to devise a Framework/Masterplan to help steer new development proposals coming forwards in the future, in order to achieve a more attractive site which still offers a retail functionality but also provides other uses to enhance visitor experience. Discussions have only recently commenced between the LPA and Railpen/Bidwells (applicant/agent), and therefore the proposals are at an early stage.

Site Context:

CRP has been one of the main retail parks within Cambridge for a number of years. It hosts a range of retailers, such as Sports Direct, Curry's and Lidl. It also features some food and drink (with takeaway), such as Pizza Hut and Starbucks. Its retail function is also shared with the nearby Beehive Centre, which is also owned by Railpen. CRP is located within the city centre and is visited by a high number of consumers each week. The site is served by vast amounts of car parking which dominates the site and has multiple vehicle access points via Newmarket Road and Coldhams Lane.

The site is not subject to any policy designations within the Cambridge Local Plan 2018, although it is set adjacent to the Eastern Gate Opportunity Area which encompasses plots to the west of CRP towards Cambridge. The site is identified as an Opportunity Area within the Emerging Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Policy SO/A/NR states that *"The New Opportunity Area proposed is low density, large-scale retail uses with extensive surface car parking. This does not make very good use of an expansive area of land in the heart of Cambridge. With changes in retailing and the increase in online shopping, when taken together with the Local Plan themes of addressing climate change and creating Great Places, these sites have the potential to provide a significant opportunity for reimagining this area close to the heart of Cambridge"*.

Regarding the main constraints, the site has a high presence of underground contamination due to its prehistoric industrial use. The site is dominated by surface level car parking which is required by the existing lease contracts of the current retailers on site and does not favour pedestrian and cycle access. This level of surface car parking could stifle more creative spaces and uses coming forwards and is therefore one of the main constraints to contend with.

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 the case officer 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.