



To: East Area Committee  
Report by: Dave Prinsep, Head of Property Services and Patsy Dell, Head of Planning Services  
Wards affected: Abbey Coleridge Petersfield Romsey

## **UPDATE ON MILL ROAD DEPOT**

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### **1. Executive summary**

This report provides an update on the current position concerning Mill Road Depot, the Council's future plans for the site and the timescales concerning such plans.

The Council plans to engage widely with local communities about future plans for Mill Road Depot once the new Local Plan is adopted. The Local Plan is currently being examined by the Planning Inspector who will take account of all submissions made about the site during the previous Local Plan consultation process.

Once the Planning Inspector reports in late autumn 2015, the Council can make future plans for any changes to Mill Road Depot and consult on specific proposals. The Council is aware of some of the opportunities and constraints of the site but will welcome a full discussion at the appropriate time.

### **2. Recommendations**

The East Area Committee is asked to note the contents of this report. No decisions are required at this time.

### **3. Background**

Mill Road Depot is the Council's main Depot for many of its services including waste, housing repairs and maintenance, stores, garage services for its fleet vehicles, office space for staff connected with these services and some commercial lettings.

There has been discussion for many years about the future use of the Depot and whether or not it is better sited elsewhere. As the Committee is aware, discussions are taking place about a shared waste service with South

Cambridgeshire District Council which could see the service relocate to Waterbeach. This would free up a significant part of the site.

The Council is also looking to rationalise its office accommodation to reduce costs and introduce more flexible working practices for staff. This means that it will be looking to free up office space at Mill Road Depot through relocation or more flexible working.

Cambridge has a pressing need for more housing of all types. Suitable land within the City is difficult to find to meet this need and underused brownfield sites present a good opportunity to help meet this need. Mill Road Depot has been included in the 'Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission' for housing as part of the Mill Road Opportunity Area. This Plan covers the period 2014-2031 and states:

- The Mill Road Opportunity Area sets out a new policy approach to Mill Road in order to maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the area. It also sets out opportunities to improve the public realm along Mill Road. Mill Road has its own character with a diverse range of shops, high quality historic environment and sense of being a distinctive local community.
- Mill Road Depot is a new local plan allocation for 167 dwellings at a density of 62 dwellings per hectare

The council submitted this Plan to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 28 March 2014 for independent examination. A Planning Inspector is currently examining the plan on behalf of the Secretary of State.

It is recognised that there is interest in a wider public debate about how the Depot site should be developed in the future. A process involving community engagement and wide public consultation will be followed, reflecting the council's approach to bringing forward major sites for development. This will be undertaken in a timely way, once the local plan is adopted. To do so now, could be perceived as pre-empting the outcome of the Local Plan examination and the work of the Planning Inspector. Given the interest in the site during the Local Plan consultation process, it is considered that the Planning Inspector should focus on the submissions made without additional debate by the Council during the examination period.

The Council is aware that there have been numerous proposed uses for the Depot site recently and as explained above it cannot at this stage become involved in those discussions. The Planning Inspector will be looking at the Mill Road Opportunity Area aspects of the Local Plan later this year/early next year and considering the representations made then.

Once the Council receives the Planning Inspector's final report in late autumn 2015, it can make future plans for the Depot site based on the report. Decisions will also have been made by that time about the shared waste service and office rationalisation and so the Council will be in a better position to consult more openly with the public.

Any future change to the use of the site will be mindful of the:

- requirements of and recommendations arising from the Local Plan Process;
- principles set out in the Mill Road Opportunity Area if adopted;
- need to address issues such as social housing and open space provision in the area;
- challenging highway and access issues;
- opportunity to complete the Chisholm Trail cycle route linking to both stations;
- distinctive character of Mill Road and the surrounding area;
- conservation area status.

#### **4. Background papers**

Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission

#### **5. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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