

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

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REPORT OF: Head of Planning Services  
TO: Planning Committee  
WARD: Romsey Ward/East Area Committee

**RIDGEON'S CROMWELL ROAD DRAFT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The City Council has been working jointly with the owners and agents of the Ridgeon's builders merchants site on Cromwell Road for the past several months on preparing a draft planning and development brief to help guide the re-development of the site for housing. The site is currently allocated in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission, known as site "R12", for development of approximately 245 dwellings. The draft allocation requires the preparation of a planning and development brief to help guide any future re-development of the site. To ensure sufficient weight can be given to such a brief, the document is being prepared in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document. Detailed local and stakeholder consultation has taken place in 2015 and has very much helped inform the drafting of the brief. The purpose of this report is to update East Area Committee on the progress in preparing the brief.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That East Area Committee receive this report as information.

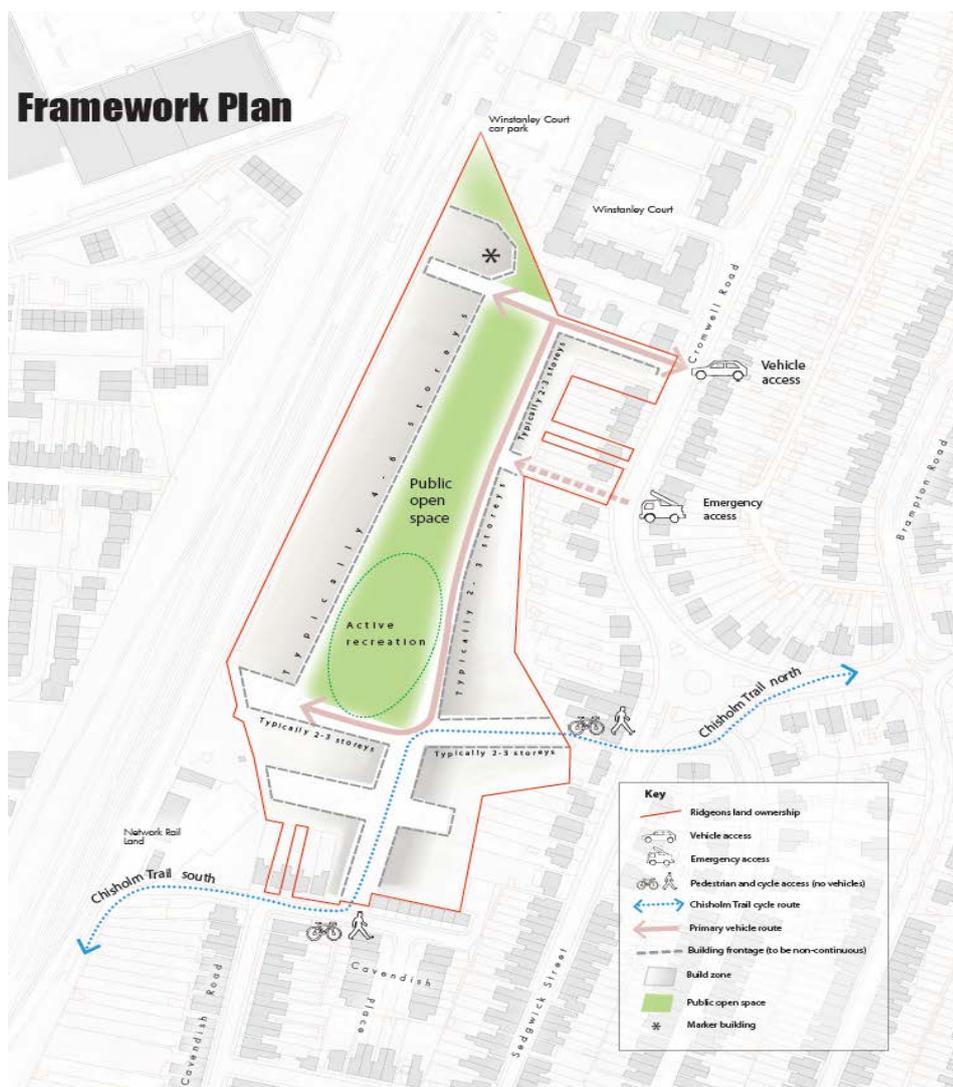
**3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The allocation of this site represents an important part of the planned housing supply to meet objectively housing assessed need for Cambridge. Ridgeon's plan to vacate this site in the future hence the re-development of the site provides a key opportunity, alongside numerous other allocated sites as listed in the Local Plan, to meet future housing need.
- 3.2 There have been two stages of informal local consultation held during the course of preparing the draft planning and development brief. The consultation has also included input from key local stakeholders such as the Cambridge Cycle Campaign and Cambridge Past Present and Future, to name a few. In March of 2015, Ridgeon's hosted an exhibition and workshop titled "themes and fact finding". This event provided an opportunity for local residents and stakeholders to make clear their aspirations (and concerns) for any re-development of the site and helped inform subsequent work by agents for Ridgeon's and Council officers. The second stage of consultation took place in July of 2015 and involved consultation on a draft "framework" plan for the site. Again an exhibition and workshop format were used and a significant amount of feedback was collected once more, this time on more detailed ideas for various "themes" for development (landscape and open space, movement, built form, etc.). All City

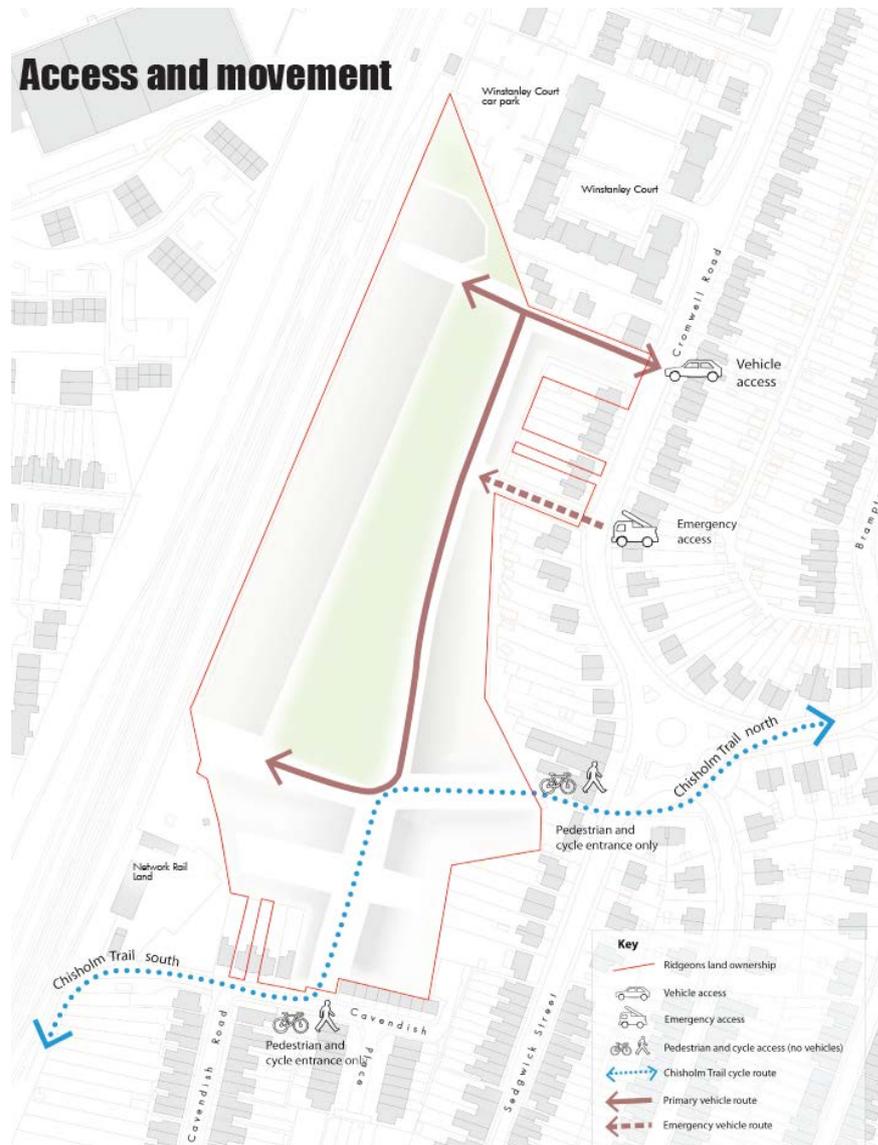
Council members of Romsey and Petersfield wards, and the ward county councillor, were invited to both consultation events.

- 3.3 To provide on-line communication with local residents and stakeholders, the owner developed and updates a web site on the work which can be found at: <http://cromwellroad-ridgeonsspd.co.uk/>
- 3.4 This SPD will be adopted at the same time as, or shortly after, the Local Plan is adopted. It cannot be adopted before the Local Plan is adopted as it is the Local Plan that provides the policy basis for this site allocation.
- 3.5 The draft planning and development brief SPD is expected to be reported in full at the December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee. Approval from the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport will be sought to then trigger a 6-week formal consultation on the draft brief SPD. Consultation is expected to take place in January, 2016.
- 3.6 The emerging Planning and Development Brief SPD includes the following key parts. The material has been prepared by the Ridgeon's team and will form part of the draft SPD. Note the work is all still in draft form and subject to change.

a) An overall draft “framework plan” as noted below:



b) An access and movement plan which sets out key routes for all modes, as shown below. Note that the development is expected to include part of the future Chisholm Trail within its southerly part. The exact alignment of the trail is still subject to change. The main features of the access and movement diagram are a single all vehicular access and a separate/secondary access for emergency vehicles only; a spine road on the east side of a large open space; and minor streets within the development which would be situated in the southerly part of any future development and respond to the “grain” of the surrounding streets:



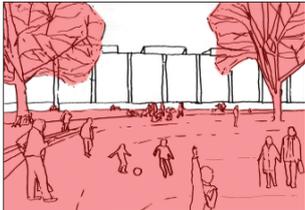
c) A series of “development principles” which will guide future development of the site, as shown below. These development principles set out “high level” principles to which development should accord and against which planning applications can be assessed. The principles are not generic but instead are tailored to ensure development responds positively to the existing constraints and opportunities in the immediate location.

**Site and surrounds** Design principles to be addressed directly in the SPD

- 1 Create an integrated community – mixing tenure and sizes of homes



- 2 Provide accessible and usable open space



- 3 Promote ecology and sustainability



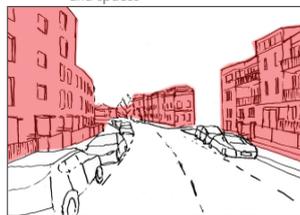
- 4 Create a connected and permeable street network for pedestrians and cyclists



- 5 Incorporate the Chisholm Trail cycle route



- 6 Create a variety of building heights that respond to surrounding buildings and spaces



- 7 Protect the amenity of surrounding properties



- 8 Respond to the character of the Mill Road Conservation Area



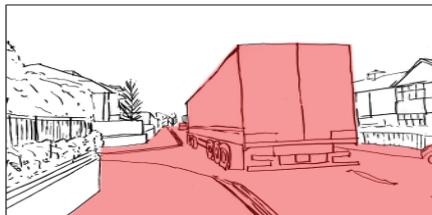
- 9 Provide enough space for car parking, car clubs and cycle parking



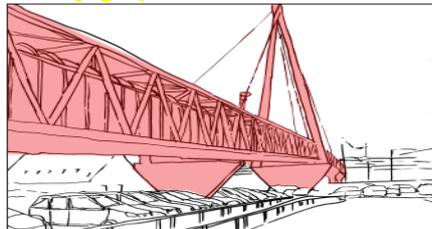
- 10 Check the provision of education and health care facilities in the local area



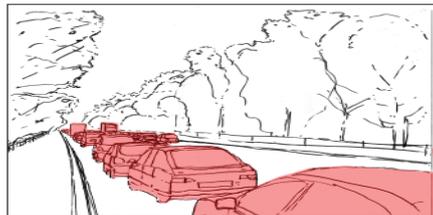
- 11 Look for opportunities to improve the public realm on Cromwell Road



- 12 Investigate the feasibility of providing a bridge over the railway (addressed on page X)



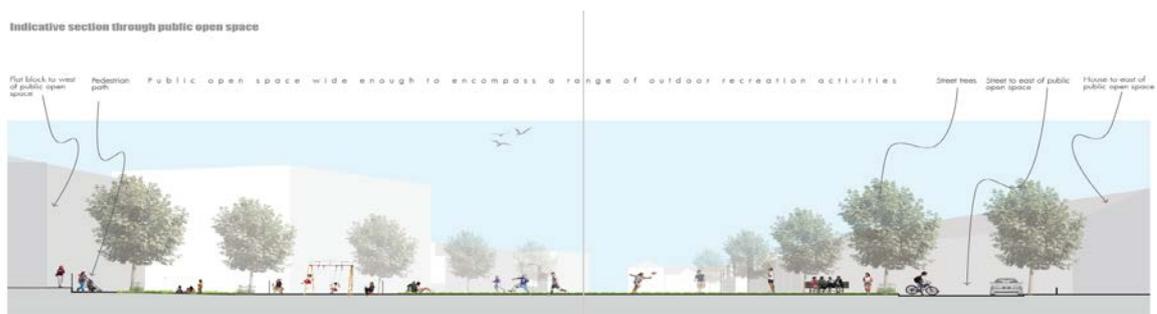
- 13 Consider the impact of vehicle traffic in the local area



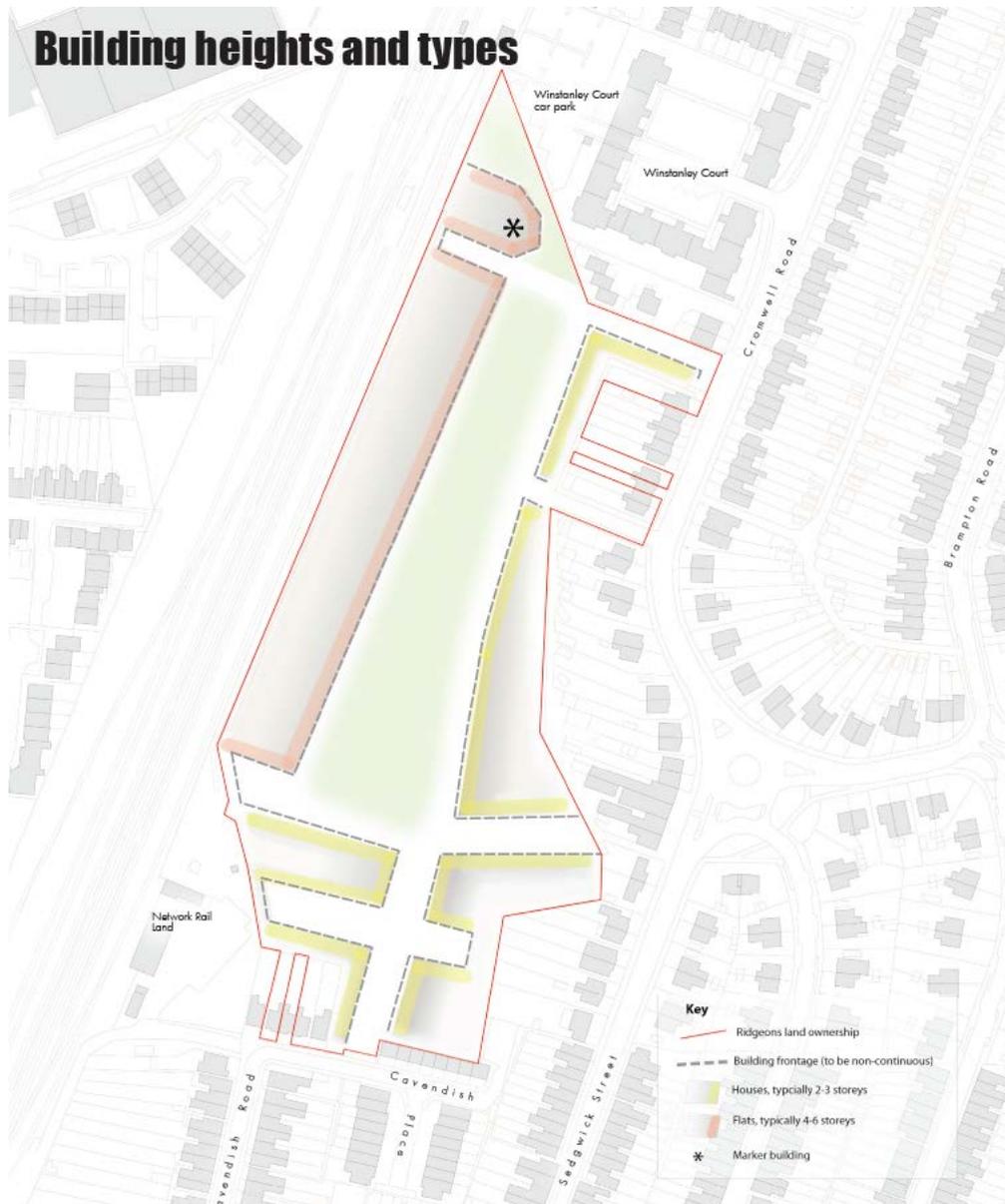
- 14 Consider improvements to public transport in the local area



- d) The proposed open space and landscape on the site has been a subject which has generated considerable interest during the consultation events. Residents and stakeholders have been concerned that public open space could be compromised if it was either too small, in the wrong location of an incorrect proportion. Ridgeon's together with Council officers have tested a number of different layouts for both perimeter blocks for housing and open space at the same time. The result is an accessible, central and lineal open space which widens out to form a large open space at its southerly end and immediately onto key routes including the planned Chisholm Trail route. The open space diagram and a long section, in its draft form (southern end), is shown below:



- e) The final key part of the framework is a building height and types diagram. Building heights are a sensitive matter in existing communities in Cambridge and the emerging framework seeks to ensure that where new development abuts existing development e.g. near Cavendish Road and Cromwell Road for example, building heights should be typically kept to 2-3 stories in height. Along the rail line building height may be able to rise to 4-6 stories to enable a good sense of enclosure to the large open space and to provide higher density accommodation such as flats. Taller building forms along the rail line also provide a degree of visual and noise attenuation to rail traffic.



- f) An indicative character and form diagram, in effect a long axonometric view, of future development as follows:

## Indicative character and form



3.7 Residents and stakeholders have raised concerns during the consultation events which the owners agents and council officers, and so in turn the draft brief, have needed to address. The most significant of these issues include a) concern for potential overspill car parking from development, b) the potential for a future cycle and pedestrian bridge over the rail line, and c) the density of development.

3.8 Taking each of the above issues in turn:

- a) The objective within the draft brief will be to achieve a 1:1 number of car parking spaces to residential units, plus visitor parking at a ratio of 0.25 (one space for every four units). A variety of car parking arrangements should be provided. Residents have made clear that development needs to consider the wider impacts of car parking and avoid excessive car parking on existing surrounding streets. Future development applications will need to be assessed with this in mind.
- b) Residents suggested there was a need for a cycle/pedestrian bridge across the rail line between the site and the Beehive Centre/Barnwell area. Concern was expressed that the existing road bridges at Mill Road and Coldham's Lane are either hostile to pedestrians and cyclists or are too distant from parts of Romsey and that an opportunity presents itself with the re-development of the Ridgeon's site to provide a new bridge. Officers of the county council have made clear that there are no long-term plans for a new

pedestrian and cycle bridge in this area, and that given the existing bridge crossings noted above a new bridge is not necessary. In addition, the cost of a new bridge is considerable and there are significant challenges (including land take and ownership, ramp design, etc.) in constructing such a bridge.

- c) Finally, there has been considerable objection (in the form of representations) to the density of this allocation in the draft Cambridge Local Plan (75 dwellings per hectare or 245 dwellings). Officers have explained to residents and stakeholders that their representations will be considered by the Planning Inspector conducting the Examination in Public of both the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans and that the preparation of the draft SPD in no way changes or supersedes that process. It should be noted however that the proposed density of 75 dwellings per hectare is not vastly different to that already approved, and built, along Cromwell Road. This density is capable of accommodating a range of house types too; indeed the framework provides for a good mix of dwelling types and sizes.

3.9 In line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, the proposed consultation arrangements, planned for January 2016, will include the following:

- Letters / e-mails including consultation details to be sent to statutory and general consultees.
- The draft SPD to be made available to view at the following locations:
  - The Council's website – [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk)
  - Cambridge City Council's Customer Service Centre, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB1 0JH.
  - Cambridge Central Library.
- An on-line consultation system will be available on the Council's websites in order for people to respond directly via the internet. Hard copies of the response form will be made available at the Council's Customer Service Centre for those who do not have access to the internet.

### **Next Steps**

3.10 Officers will be reviewing in detail the draft planning and development brief prepared by the owner's agents during the month of November and finalising same in draft form. A report will then be prepared for the December 2015 meeting of the Council's Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee. If agreed at that time by the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport, public consultation on the draft brief will take place during January and February 2016. Representations will be reviewed thereafter with a view to preparing a final planning and development brief SPD to be adopted by full Council concurrently with (but only following) the Cambridge Local Plan as and when it is ready for adoption.

## 4. Implications

### Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no significant financial issues arising from the preparation of this SPD. Staffing resources are already committed through the budget and service plan process. Funding for consultation is allowed for in existing consultation budgets.

### Staffing Implications

- 4.2 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. The development of the SPD is already included in existing work plans.

### Equality and Poverty Implications

- 4.3 The SPD, once adopted, will have a positive impact by ensuring the site is integrated into the wider area. New development within the site should provide access for people with limited mobility.

### Environmental Implications

- 4.4 The redevelopment of the Ridgeon's site should provide for the development of energy efficient buildings as well as the inclusion of renewable and low carbon energy generation.

### Consultation

- 4.5 Consultation arrangements are set in paragraphs 3.11 and are consistent with the Council's Code of best practice on consultation and community engagement and Statement of Community Involvement 2013.

### Community Safety

- 4.6 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

## 5. Background papers

- 5.1 These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
- Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission (as amended) <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-plan-review-proposed-submission-consultation>
  - Event records prepared by GL Hearn for Ridgeon's and dated March 2015 and July 2015 as found at <http://cromwellroad-ridgeonsspd.co.uk/stage-2/>

## 6. Inspection of papers

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

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