

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Director of Environment
TO: Planning Committee
WARD: Petersfield Ward/East Area Committee

**MILL ROAD DEPOT DRAFT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The City Council is preparing a Planning and Development Brief SPD to help guide the re-development of the Mill Road Depot. The depot is allocated for residential development (site R10) in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission for 167 dwellings. This report provides a short update on the preparation of the brief to date.

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. The Council has already reduced the activities carried out on site and plan to vacate the site and buildings in future, hence the re-development of the site provides an opportunity to meet future housing need for the city.
- 3.2 By the time this report is considered at committee, there will have been a second informal local consultation held during the course of preparing the draft planning and development brief (on 26 January, 2016). The consultation has included input from key local stakeholders and residents who have provided helpful feedback on a number of key topics so far.
- 3.3 The Supplementary Planning Document can only be adopted at the same time as, or immediately following, the adoption of the new Local Plan.
- 3.4 The draft planning and development brief SPD is expected to be reported in full at Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 14 March, 2016. Approval from the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport will then be sought to trigger a 6-week formal consultation on the draft planning and development brief SPD. Consultation is expected to take place after local government elections later in 2016.

3.5 Residents and stakeholders raised a number of issues during the first consultation event held on 10 November, 2015 at St. Philips Church Centre on Mill Road. The draft planning and development brief SPD will need to address these issues, which include:

- Need for community facilities;
- Open space provision;
- Building heights;
- Potential for car-free development;
- Desire for access from Mill Road only;
- Pressure on local primary schools from increased development;
- The amount of affordable housing;
- Sustainable design; and
- The future of the existing garages at the north end of the site (leaseholders).

3.6 A summary “Event Record” from the first “community workshop” on 10 November, 2015, is attached to this report as Appendix 1. A second workshop will be held on 26 January, 2016, and will explore further some of these key topic areas. Officers will be able to provide a verbal update at East Area Committee regarding the outcomes of this second workshop.

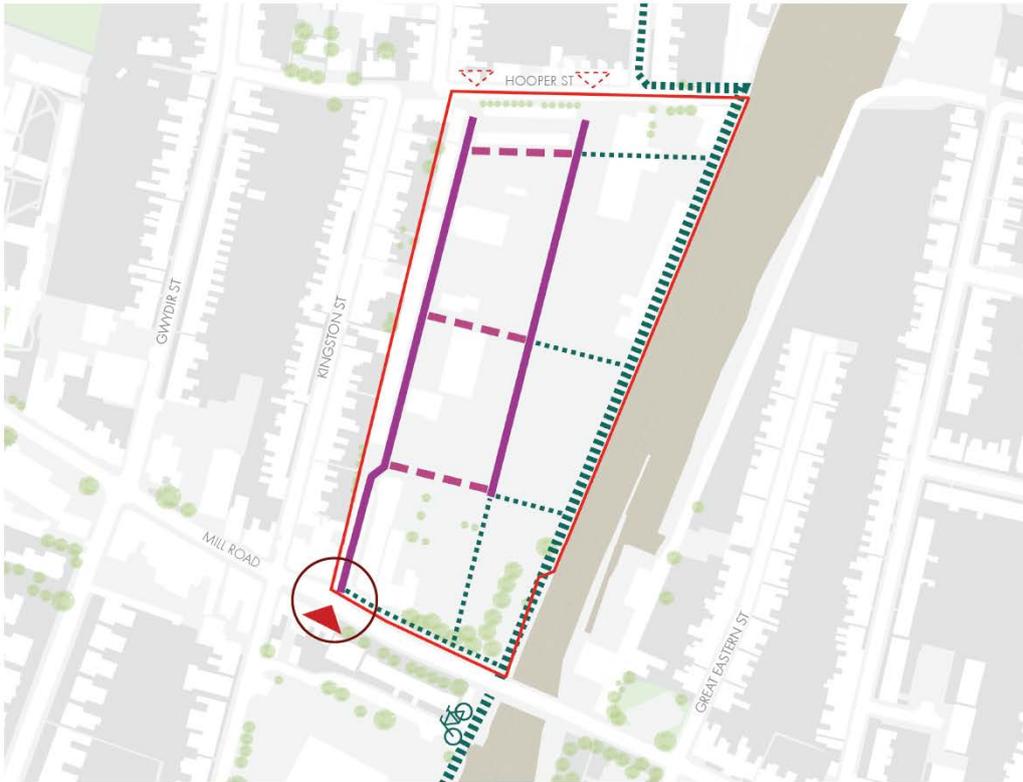
3.7 The Council and consultant team and officers in the Planning Service have been working closely over the past few months in reviewing public comments and considering potential approaches to the redevelopment of the site. The key “moves” may be summed up in the following illustrations. The labels on the right hand side of each image describe the key topic areas:





OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETENTION

- existing buildings with potential for adaptive re-use
- potential to retain garages
- existing trees with potential for retention
- study area



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTIVITY & MOVEMENT

- single point for motor vehicle access
- pedestrian and cycle access / emergency access only
- junction improvement
- primary roads
- secondary roads
- pedestrian/cycle links
- Chiselm Trail
- study area



- 3.8 In summary, there are a number of key constraints to consider in developing any site layout, including land contamination, vehicular access (proposed to be limited to Mill Road but subject to detailed testing), existing landscape, noise from the rail line, the need to incorporate the Chisholm Trail along the east side of the site, and heritage assets, amongst others. It is considered desirable to seek to retain a number of key buildings on the site, including the Gatehouse, the Former Free Library, and the old coach house building on the westerly edge of the site. In addition there are land holdings on the depot site which are not in the ownership of the City Council and are occupied by the Regent Language School. Some garages at the north end of the site are also the subject of long term leases. In terms of opportunities, subject to further work and agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council as Highways Authority, a single vehicular access from Mill Road and a “grid” pattern street layout could be the most efficient way to service the site, however further detailed work and analysis is required in this regard. A permanent emergency access and pedestrian cycle access will likely be necessary from Hooper Street in addition to the retention of access to the privately leased garages. Finally, the location, size and orientation of open space is being considered in detail. Options include a linear open space coincidental with the Chisholm Trail, an open space adjacent Mill Road just north of the Mill Road bridge (along with existing mature trees in the same location) and/or one central open space. Further work and testing on all these issues will be undertaken in the coming weeks leading to the completion of a draft brief to be reported in March 2016 as noted earlier in this report.

Next Steps

- 3.9 If the contents of the draft Planning and Development Brief SPD are agreed at by the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport at the meeting of the Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting on 14 March 2016, formal

public consultation on the draft planning and development brief will be arranged to take place after elections in May, 2016. Representations will be reviewed thereafter with a view to preparing a final planning and development brief SPD document to be adopted by Full Council concurrently with (or 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 planning and development brief 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 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 Formal consultation on the draft SPD is planned to commence in May 2016, following two rounds of informal consultation taking place as part of the preparation of the draft SPD in November, 2015, and January, 2016.

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>

6. Inspection of papers

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

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APPENDIX 1: Mill Road Depot SPD Event Record – Community Workshop
10th November 2015 at St Philips Church Centre, Mill Road

Appendix 1:

Mill Road Depot SPD Event Record – Community Workshop 10th November 2015 at St Philips Church Centre, Mill Road

Overview

A consultation workshop was held for local people to have their say on the future of the Mill Road Depot site on Tuesday 10 November. Community members were asked to discuss questions around the following themes:

- *Land-uses;*
- *Accessibility and movement;*
- *Design; and*
- *Open space, public realm and landscaping.*

A number of key issues and priorities were identified:

- *Need for community facilities;*
- *Open space provision;*
- *Building height;*
- *Car-free development;*
- *Access only from Mill Road;*
- *Pressure on local primary schools from increased development;*
- *The amount of affordable housing;*
- *Sustainable design; and*
- *The future of the existing garages (leaseholders).*

Land-uses

- *There was strong consensus for mixed-tenure, social/co-operative housing of some kind. Some suggested housing provision for elderly residents. There were mixed views as to whether the site was suitable for student housing.*
- *Participants considered other uses for the site as part of a housing-led approach. There was strong agreement for new community space – a primary school/nursery school and LGBT centre were suggestions. The space should have at least two rooms. Provision for small businesses e.g. low cost workshops was also suggested. Some noted that the Women’s Resource Centre should be reprovided.*
- *A number of attendees stated a preference that the existing garages should be retained.*

Open spaces/public realm

- *Many suggested the need for open space, including a plaza/square which could be a central community hub for Mill Road residents.*
- *Green spaces for community growing/products e.g. on roofs or allotments and a ‘please kick a ball and run around space’ were also suggested.*
- *Play area provision should be for different age groups and be designed based on what young people really want. A linear park was suggested that would run parallel to the railway line to the east of the site.*
- *The site should not be isolated from public view and open space should be accessible to everyone. There was strong support for more trees, wider pavements and improved bin storage solutions.*

Access and movement

- *There was clear consensus that access should only be from Mill Road and not from the north of the site. Various options exist for internal access routes. For example,*

streets could run along the railway line, parallel to a linear park with houses in an east-west direction. Existing road restrictions should be maintained.

- There were concerns over basement parking – whether it would bring too much traffic to the surrounding area and how cost-prohibitive it is. Some felt a basement car park could be located by the areas of contamination.
- There was strong support for car-free development, although some were concerned that people would park cars in surrounding streets if car-free and it would be difficult to police. Access should be for refuse and emergency use only. Others felt that there should be limited parking, at least, for visitors and disabled residents.
- There were many ideas about provision for cars and cyclists. These were:
 - o Car-charging spaces
 - o Hidden cars – orchards at edges
 - o Car share schemes
 - o Rental schemes for car parking
 - o Plenty of cycle storage which is really accessible and close to the housing
- There was general support for the Chisholm cycle route to be extended and for it to move through the site. There should be a lot of access points to the trail from the site.

Key questions raised include the following:

- o How many cars will there actually be?
- o Has a traffic audit been done?
- o How does access plug into wider network/movement patterns?
- o Is Mill Road access to depot safe?

Design

- The Gatehouse building should be kept
- The industrial buildings are more likely to be suitable for demolition.
- A number of participants mentioned the need for sustainable-led design. There was also consensus about the need for architecture and layout to respond to the character and form of the local area.
- Different options exist in terms of the orientation of housing. Future developments in the vicinity such as the Travis Perkins site should be considered when making decisions on building height and density.
- There is potential for buildings to increase in height closer to the railway line.
- Many supported two-storey development although some felt it was unrealistic and noted that taller scale might be appropriate subject to design.
- Sustainable design (i.e. solar design, passive gain) should be a priority.
- Non-habitable rooms should overlook the railway.
- It was suggested that the grain should be extended from Ainsworth Street in keeping with the local character – terraced houses were also an idea.
- Others said they did not want any “pretend Victorian houses” or “Cromwell Road aesthetic”.
- Local brick should be used to reflect the character of Mill Road and there should be a sense of space rather than feeling cramped in.