



To: Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport  
Report by: Director of Environment  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee 14/3/2016  
Wards affected: Petersfield Ward

**MILL ROAD DEPOT  
DRAFT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING  
DOCUMENT**

Not a Key Decision

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The submitted Cambridge Local Plan (2014) allocates the Mill Road Depot and adjoining properties for approximately 167 homes (R10). The allocation is located within the proposed policy area for Policy 23: Mill Road Opportunity Area. The City Council as the Local Planning Authority has been working in partnership with Allies and Morrison<sup>1</sup> to prepare a planning and development brief. The planning and development brief will help guide the redevelopment of the site for housing and will provide greater certainty and detail to support delivery of the allocation.
- 1.2 In order to ensure sufficient weight can be given to such a brief, the document is being prepared in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 1.3 The draft Mill Road Depot Planning and Development Brief SPD (Appendix A) has been produced for public consultation. The document outlines the aspirations for the site, as well as the key issues, constraints and opportunities that will influence how future development on the site will take place. Detailed local and stakeholder consultation has taken place on two occasions, which has helped inform the drafting of the brief.
- 1.4 A six week public consultation is proposed to take place after the local elections in May 2016.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 This report is being submitted to the Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee for prior consideration and comment before decision by the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport.
- 2.2 The Executive Councillor is recommended:

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<sup>1</sup> Allies and Morrison have been appointed on behalf of the City Council as a land owner.  
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- a) To agree the content of the draft Mill Road Depot Draft Planning and Development Brief SPD (Appendix A);
- b) To agree that if any amendments are necessary, these should be agreed by the Executive Councillor in consultation with Chair and Spokes of Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee;
- c) To approve the draft SPD for public consultation to commence in May 2016;
- d) To approve the consultation arrangements as set out in paragraphs 3.10 to 3.11 and the proposed schedule of consultees in Appendix B.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Mill Road Depot is the main site for many of Cambridge City Council's services, including waste disposal, maintenance, storage, and a garage servicing centre for its vehicles. It also incorporates council office space, commercial lettings, two community facilities and leased garages. The council's decision in October 2014 to relocate the Depot to Waterbeach, following the creation of a single shared waste facility with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), has freed up the site for redevelopment. The council has already reduced the activities carried out on site and plan to vacate the site and buildings in the near future. The site presents a good opportunity to provide more homes to meet the growing demand for housing in Cambridge.
- 3.2 The site is 2.7 hectares in area and has the potential to deliver 167 dwellings, as identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Site Allocation R10 in the submission Cambridge Local Plan (2014). The allocation is located within the proposed policy area for Policy 23: Mill Road Opportunity Area. More specifically to the site's implementation, the proposals schedule in the emerging Local Plan states the following: "*The site promoters will be expected to prepare a planning and development brief for the site demonstrating how development will successfully integrate with the existing residential area as well as addressing the constraints and opportunities of the site. Scale, massing and density considerations in the design and disposition of new and existing housing will be expected to have regard to the character of the existing area*".
- 3.3 The City Council as the Local Planning Authority has been working in partnership with Allies and Morrison<sup>2</sup> to prepare a planning and development brief for the allocation. As part of this process, there have been two stages of informal local consultation held as well as input from key local stakeholders. In November 2015, the council hosted a workshop in the local area of the site which focused on issues and priorities for the future development of the site. This event provided an opportunity for local residents and stakeholders to make clear their aspirations (and concerns) for any redevelopment of the site and helped inform subsequent work by consultants and council officers.
- 3.4 The second stage of consultation took place in January 2016 and involved consultation on draft planning and design principles for the site. Again a workshop format was used and a significant amount of feedback was collected once more, this time on more detailed ideas for various "themes" to guide development proposals (landscape and open space, movement, built form, etc.). All City and County Council members of Romsey and Petersfield wards were invited to both consultation events.

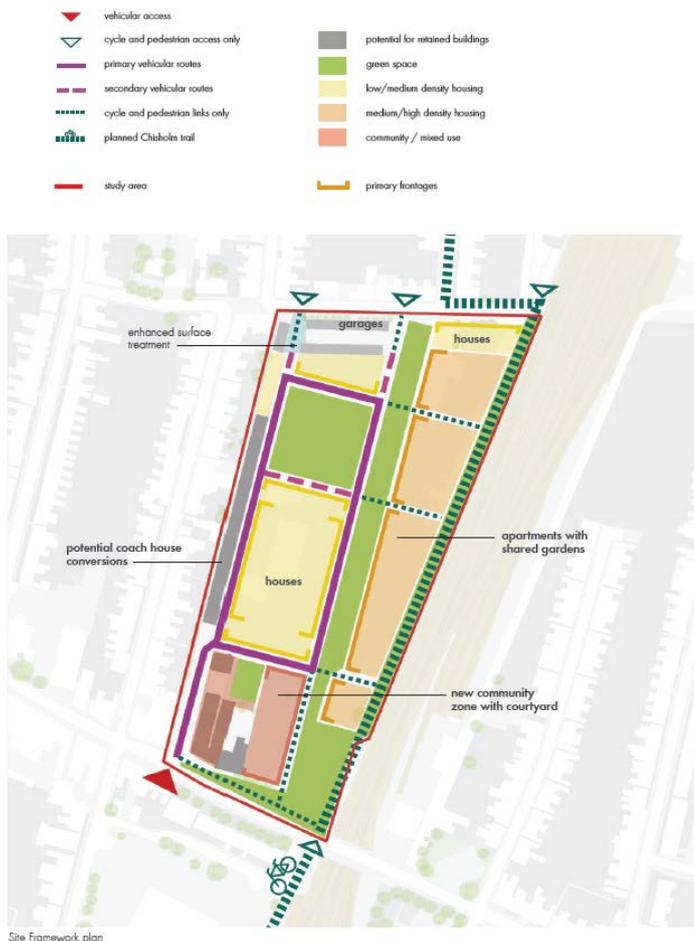
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<sup>2</sup> Allies and Morrison have been appointed on behalf of the City Council as a land owner.  
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3.5 In addition a number of stakeholder groups were invited such as the Mill Road Society, Petersfield Area Community Trust (PACT), Mill Road Co-ordinator, Romsey Garden Club, Romsey Garden Project, Cam Cycle, Cambridge Past, Present and Future, Glisson Road and Tenison Road Area Residents Association (GTARA), South Petersfield Residents Association (SoPRA), Cambridge Association of Architects, Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum (CECF) and the Argyle Street Housing Co-operative (ASH co-op).

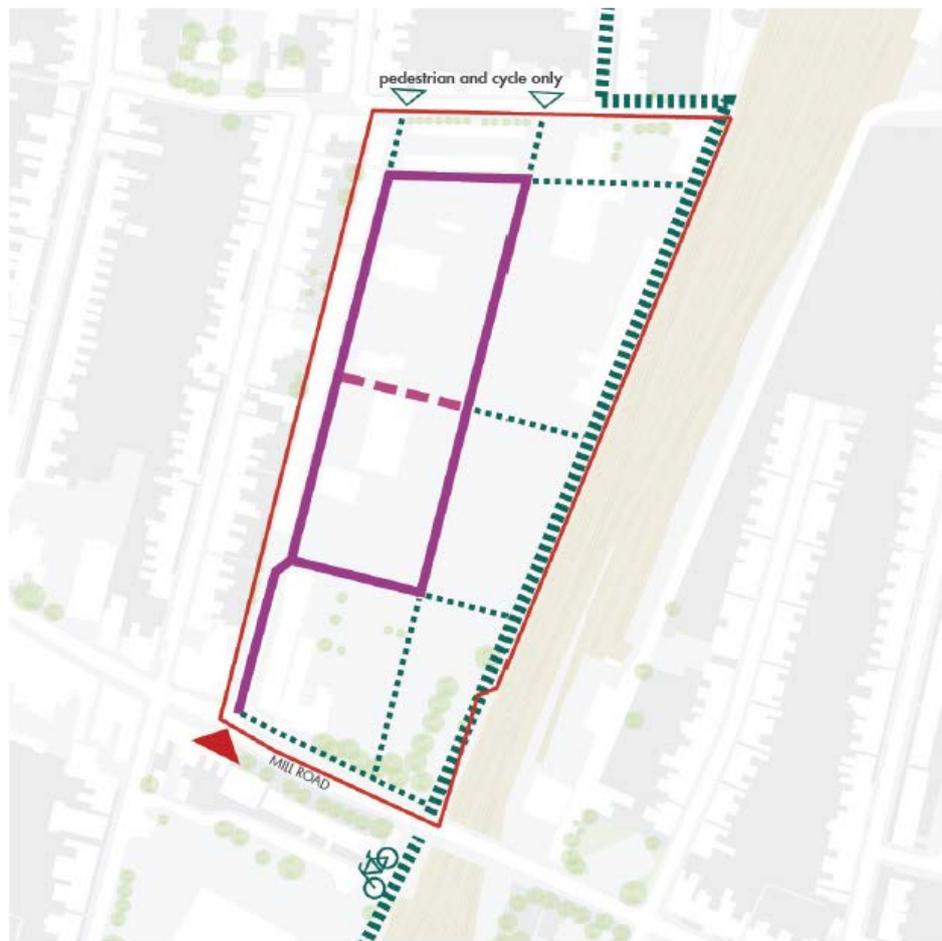
3.3 The emerging Mill Road Depot SPD has sought to address comments received to date constructively and creatively and balance the practical need of site delivery with the context of the local housing market and the council’s own objectives. The emerging Mill Road Depot SPD includes the following key parts:

- a) A series of “development principles” which will guide future development of the site. These development principles set out “high level” requirements to which development should aspire 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 of the site and surrounding location. The development principles relate to the following:
  - a. Access and permeability
  - b. Housing-led mix of uses
  - c. Design
  - d. Open spaces/environment
  
- b) An overall draft “framework plan” as noted below (in effect a composite of the various plans which follow):



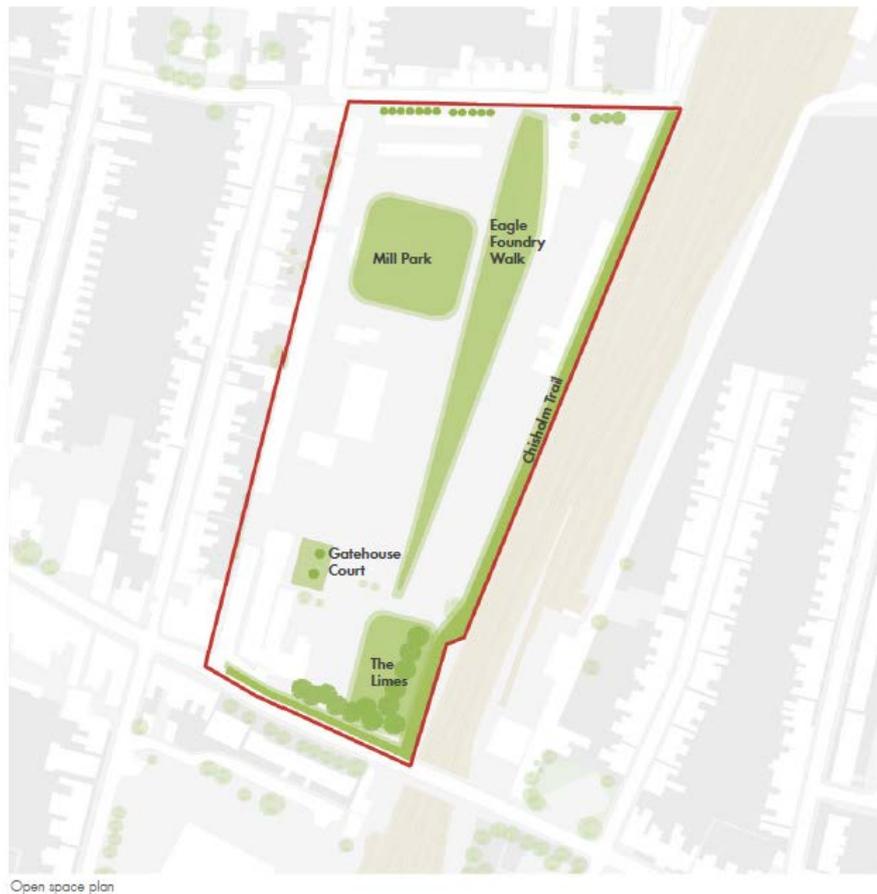
c) A transport and access plan which sets out key routes for all modes, as shown below. Note that the development is expected to include part of the future Chisholm Trail within its easterly edge. The main features of the access and movement diagram are a single, all-vehicular access taken from Mill Road and a separate/secondary access for emergency vehicles, cycles and pedestrians only from Hooper Street, in addition to a north-south oriented circular street through the site with secondary routes which connect between and off this route:

-  Site entrance
-  Restricted site access
-  Primary vehicular routes
-  Secondary vehicular routes
-  Links to Chisholm trail
-  Planned Chisholm trail
-  Study area



Transport and Access plan

- d) An open space plan which sets out different types and sizes of green space in various locations across the site. The main spaces would comprise two larger areas of open space, one in the south-east corner and one towards the north end of the site; two linear green spaces, one within the site and one twinned with the future Chisholm Trail on the eastern edge of the site; and one small space to the rear of the existing Gatehouse.



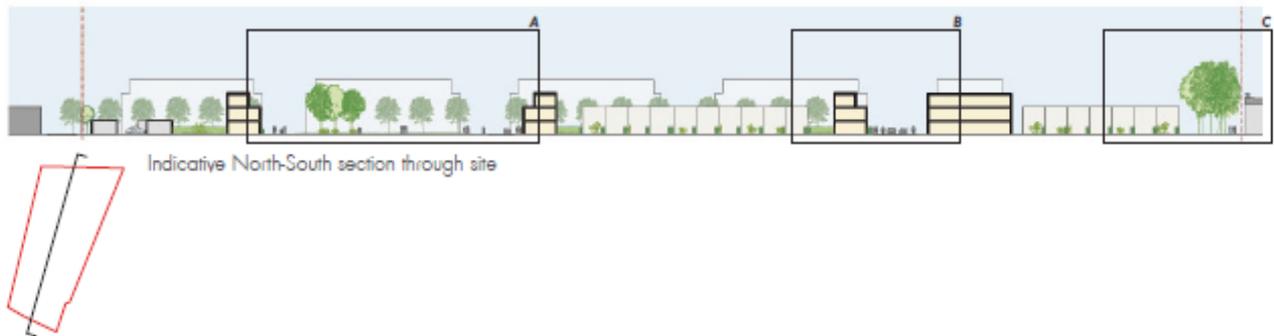
- e) The final key part of the framework is a building heights plan. Building heights are a sensitive subject in existing communities in Cambridge. The emerging Mill Road Depot SPD seeks to ensure that where new development abuts existing development e.g. near Kingston Street and Hooper Street, building heights should be typically kept to 2 storeys maximum. Along the rail line building height may be able to rise to 3-4 storeys to provide a strong edge to the rail line but also to provide an appropriate location flats so that a variety of accommodation can be delivered overall across the site. Taller building forms along the rail line also provide a degree of visual and noise attenuation to rail traffic. There is reference to an “opportunity for taller development” in one location only towards the south-eastern end of the site, which is meant to signify that a building could be located here at 5-storeys in height, however this would be subject to clear justification and excellent design.



- f) An illustrative masterplan is included in the draft Mill Road Depot SPD. This plan must be read only for what it is, an illustration. It shows one way in which the framework plan and higher level “parameters” of movement, open space, etc. could be delivered on site:



Finally, the following indicative site section shows how the proposed scale and mass the site could appear when viewed from the west e.g. looking in an easterly direction when positioned in the middle of the site:



3.6 Residents and stakeholders raised several issues during the consultation events which the consultants and council officers have considered further and sought to address in the draft Mill Road Depot SPD. While not an exclusive list of matters raised at workshops, these issues do represent the main “themes” which came up in most in discussions of working groups at the events. The issues include:

- a) integration of community facilities
- b) open space provision
- c) building heights
- d) parking
- e) site access
- f) level of affordable housing
- g) future of existing leased garages

3.7 Taking each of the above issues in turn:

- a) There appeared to be a general consensus at the workshops about the need to maintain some form of community use on the site. There was also recognition that the Women’s Resource Centre, currently housed in a building on the north-east corner of the site, would require future re-location (whether off or on-site would need to be determined). Many felt that community uses, such as the Bharat Bhavan use of the old library, are a good use of the more heritage characterful buildings at the southern end of the site (the Gatehouse and former library, for example). It is clear however that the SPD cannot be overly specific at this stage about what community uses may or may not be appropriate on site. Further work will be required in the form of a brief to help inform any community uses planned alongside the delivery of housing.
- b) Open space was a subject of considerable interest at both consultation events. A dispersion of good quality, accessible open space within the site was generally supported, though concern was expressed about the potential for anti-social activity occurring in some of these areas. To avoid this occurring, such spaces will need to be both inviting to use, well lit and well overlooked by future development. The protection of existing trees and room for future trees was seen as important. Use of green spaces for food growing and communal gardens was also encouraged.
- c) Building heights were discussed at each event. An approximate building height range of between 2-4 residential storeys on the site was considered acceptable, with a caveat that lower building heights should be required adjacent existing residential boundaries. The brief includes this height range,

with potential for taller (4 storey) flats on the east side of the site along the rail line and one localised opportunity for a taller building (5-storeys) in the south-eastern corner of the site, subject to design.

- d) Parking is a topic that always raises public interest and the two workshops on the Mill Road Depot were no exception. Many workshop attendees were strongly encouraging a car-free development on the site, while others were encouraging low car parking ratios e.g. less than 0.6 spaces per unit. Other comments raised the notion of parking underground. In all cases, the management of car parking was seen as key to any successful scheme and to avoid conflict with surrounding areas. Rather than set out a specific parking ratio in the SPD, the text used in the draft SPD states that new development should promote lower car parking ratios overall.
- e) Site access is a challenge for any new development that fronts Mill Road, and it is particularly challenging in a location next to a bridge over a rail line. The existing visual splay for drivers exiting Mill Road Depot is particularly poor. The County Council as highway authority do not consider the existing access to be suitable for residential use, hence a new solution to cater for residential development will be necessary. The City Council appointed external consultants to review options for improving this junction and it has been recommended that changes to the junction as well as improvements to create better sight lines looking east will be necessary. Further detailed work will be necessary to refine the design and cost for any such junction.
- f) The level of affordable housing was discussed at both workshops and there was a good level of support for a balance of house types and tenures, including for the development of affordable housing. A preference appeared to emerge that the council should retain freehold ownership of the site and pursue a range of affordable house types on site.
- g) The existing privately leased garages at the northern end of the site were the subject of interest at consultation events. Given the relatively long lease that remains on some of these garages (understood to be up to 60 years in some cases), it is clear that there is concern over the potential loss of the use of the garages for some people. The framework plan and related plans in the SPD are therefore tailored to enable the garages to remain at least in the short/medium term and, in the event of the termination of garage leases and removal of the garage structures, the land upon which they are located could then be re-developed for housing fronting Hooper Street as part of the wider redevelopment.

3.8 Planning obligations will be necessary as part of the re-development of the Mill Road Depot. The wording as proposed in the draft SPD is more general in this regard, but ultimately any future developer will have to agree the details of planning obligations at planning application stages.

### **Consultation Arrangements**

3.9 It is proposed that a public consultation takes place on the draft SPD after the local elections in May. This will be for six weeks, running from mid-May to late June 2016, with precise dates to be confirmed in due course.

3.10 In line with the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, the proposed consultation arrangements will be as follows:

- 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.
- An exhibition will be held in the local area during the course of the consultation, the date and location of which has yet to be finalised. However, once arranged the event will be advertised in the local area.

3.11 A Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report have been carried out and consulted upon for the emerging Cambridge Local Plan 2014. This consultation took place between 19 July and 30 September 2013. These documents, along with other supporting documents will also be made available to view during this consultation. As the draft SPD supports the Cambridge Local Plan, there is no further need to undertake a separate Sustainability Appraisal or Habitats Regulations Assessment for this document, although screening reports have been completed and will be made available during the consultation.

## **Next Steps**

- 3.12 The representations received will then be used to help guide the development of the draft SPD and will be reported along with the final version of the SPD.
- 3.13 The 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.

## **4. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no significant financial issues arising from the preparation of this SPD. Project and 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 Mill Road Depot 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 out in other parts of this report 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 Record prepared by Allies and Morrison Architects (February 2016)
  - [Mill Road Depot Surface Water Drainage](#) (Cambridge City Council, 2016)
  - [Surface water storage requirements for sites](#) (HR Wallingford, 2016)
  - [Indicative Risk of Contamination](#) (Cambridge City Council, 2016)

## **6. Appendices**

- Appendix A: Mill Road Depot Draft Planning and Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document
- Appendix B: Proposed Statement of Consultation

## **7. Inspection of papers**

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

Author's Name: Glen Richardson  
Author's Phone Number: 01223 457374  
Author's Email: [glen.richardson@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:glen.richardson@cambridge.gov.uk)