

Item

## **REPORT ON DELIVERY OF A NEW CENTRE FOR BARNWELL IN CONJUNCTION WITH CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**To:**

Councillor Gerri Bird, Executive Councillor for Housing

Housing Scrutiny Committee 22/09/2022

**Report by:**

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**Wards affected:**

Abbey

### **Key Decision**

#### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 In September 2020 HSC received the interim report East Cambridge Development & Regeneration Project: Masterplan for East Barnwell. Although suffering from deprivation, Barnwell has a strong local community. The Framework for Change (see Appendix 1) document formed part of a process to consider how a stronger and more vital centre might be created for this community.
- 1.2 The Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge City Council have developed proposals to work together with the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) to deliver the new community centre, library and pre-school facility in the context of a regeneration scheme across three sites owned by the two Councils.
- 1.3 The proposals will provide for:
- A new Community Centre
  - A new library
  - A new pre-school facility
  - New commercial premises
  - New publicly accessible open space
  - New high quality sustainable housing including affordable housing

- 1.4 It is proposed to enter into development agreements with Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge Investment Partnership to deliver the project and to provide for:
- A programme
  - Phasing of development
  - Arrangements for the transfer of completed elements within the development to Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council or to third parties
  - Financial contributions by the parties
- 1.5 The proposals include re-provision of the bowling green at the over-flow car park at the Abbey Leisure Centre. Options in relation to the tennis court and the multi-use games area currently located on the sites are under review.
- 1.6 There has been local consultation on the proposed community centre. This will be taken into account and there will be continuing consultation with the local community on the proposals leading to a planning application early in 2023. The aim is to construct the proposed new community centre by the first half of 2025. Consultations have identified the need for new facilities beyond the scope of this project. The extent to which that provision can be supported and timing of provision will be the subject of a further report.
- 1.7 The aim of the proposal is to finance the development from the sale of new homes. A financial contribution will be made by the County Council. The development will provide 40% affordable housing. There are 18 homes on the site at present – 12 at 634-656 Newmarket Road and 6 over the shops at Barnwell Road. Separate proposals will be submitted regarding the purchase of the affordable homes by the City Council when the plans are finalised. The requirement for a contribution from the City Council to support the provision of facilities will be assessed at that stage.

## **2 Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor for Housing is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the completion of the work on the Framework for Change document and the attached report.
- 2.2 Grant Delegated Authority to the Strategic Director in consultation with The Executive Councillor for Housing to enter into development/relevant agreements and finalise and approve terms with Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) and Cambridgeshire County Council, to deliver the proposed scheme.

The purpose of the Development Agreements will be:

- 2.2.1 To enable land owned by Cambridge City Council HRA (as shown in Appendix 2) to be transferred to CIP via a long lease for the purposes of development as set out in section 6 of the report and subject to independent valuation.
- 2.2.2 To note that upon completion of the development CIP lease would collapse (except where new houses are sold freehold) with interests to be transferred to the County Council in relation to facilities for which they will maintain overall responsibility.
- 2.2.3 That the development be brought forward by CIP to include:
  - A new Community Centre
  - A new library
  - A new pre-school facility
  - New commercial premises
  - New publicly accessible open space
  - New high quality sustainable housing including affordable housing
- 2.2.4 That the agreement will provide for:
  - A programme
  - Phasing of development
  - Financial contributions by the parties
  - Other matters as required to give effect to the agreement
- 2.3 Grant Delegated Authority to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Head of Property Services and Head of Legal Services, acting on behalf of the Council as the landowner to finalise and approve the terms of any disposal, leases, easements, agreements and contracts that may be required to deliver the scheme. This may include any planning obligations under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which is required by the Council in its capacity as the local planning authority pursuant to the planning application or applications for the development of the sites, S278 highway agreements and other similar agreements required to be entered into.
- 2.4 Note that consultations are in progress to clarify community needs which can be met within the facilities to be provided on the land jointly owned by the two Councils and to identify needs which cannot be met on these sites.

The Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation is recommended to:

- 2.5 Enable land owned by Cambridge City Council General Fund (as shown in Appendix 2) to be transferred to CIP via a long lease for the purposes of development as set out in section 6 of the report and subject to independent valuation, and specifically:
  - 2.5.1 Approve the use of the Bowls Club site (See plan at Appendix 2) to provide a mixed-use development including but not limited to the community centre, the library and the pre-school facility.
  - 2.5.2 Approve the redevelopment of the overflow car park at the Abbey Leisure Centre (ref Appendix 4) to re-provide the Bowls Green (ref Appendix 4) and the grant a new lease to the bowls club on terms to be agreed to enable the vacation of the existing bowls club.

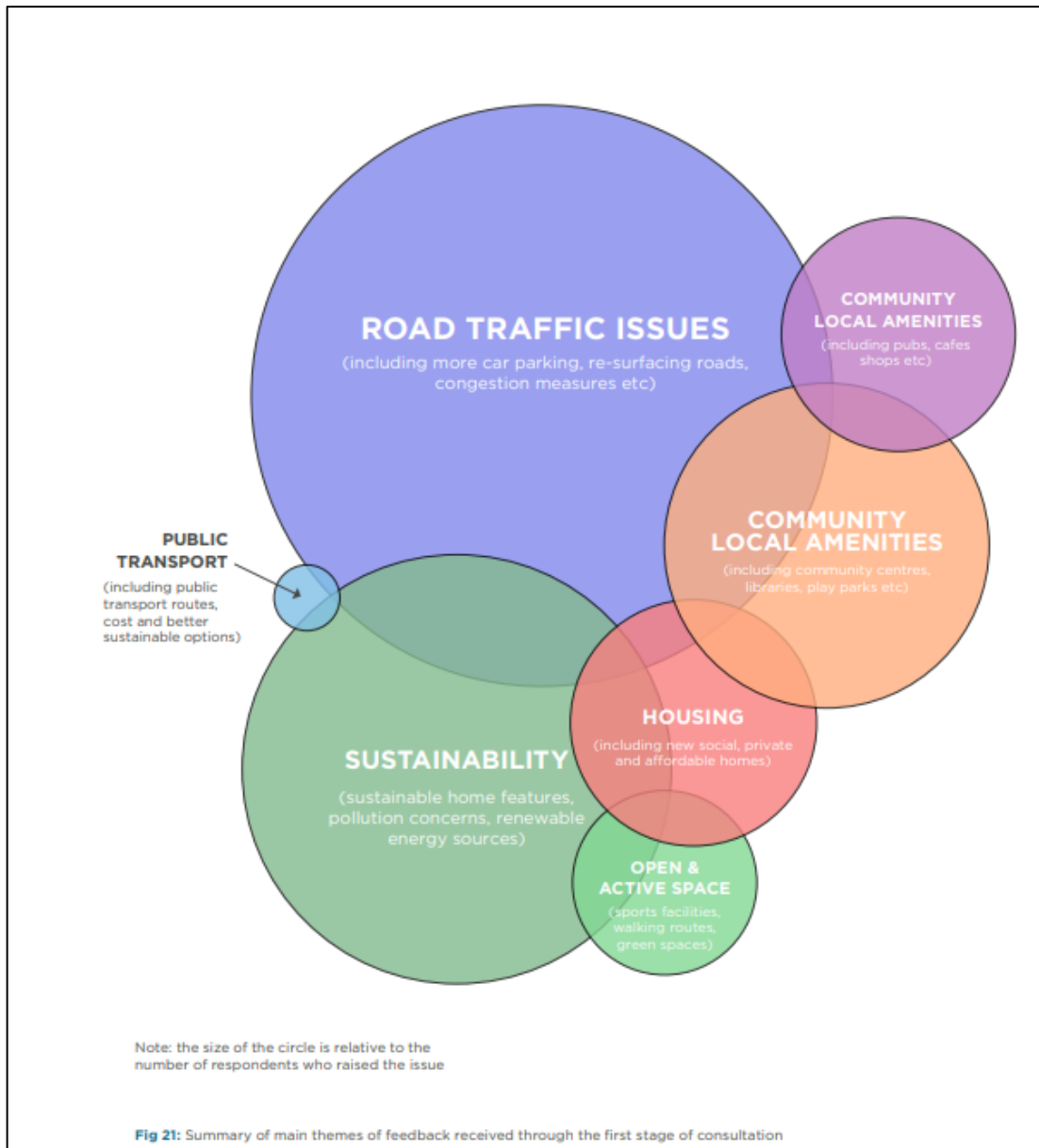
### **3 Background - Barnwell Regeneration**

- 3.1 Barnwell is a distinct relatively self-contained community separated to a degree from Cambridge by common land and the railway. It is the most deprived area in the city. It is also divided by major roads: Newmarket Road and Barnwell Road. At the centre of the area is what is now commonly referred to as 'the McDonalds roundabout' which is an inhospitable junction with buildings – whether homes, commercial or community uses set back; leaving a strong sense of domination by traffic.
- 3.2 Most of the area is post-war council estate; many properties have now been sold under the Right to Buy. With the common land, recreation grounds and the generous lay-out of the estates, much of the area is better served with open space than some parts of the city but there are areas where this could be improved.
- 3.3 Cambridge has been found by several studies to be the most unequal city in the UK. Average life expectancy differs between rich and poorer wards by as much as 11 years.
- 3.4 Abbey Ward is in the bottom 5 deciles in terms of barriers to Housing and Services, which measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. This redevelopment will look to considerably increase the number of affordable housing in the area and address the housing shortage within the City.
- 3.5 66.8% of the residents living in the Abbey Ward are in the bottom 5 deciles in terms of income deprivation. 10.2% of households within the ward are experiencing fuel poverty, with this likely to rise considering the current fuel price crisis in the country.

- 3.6 The development will have a positive impact on low-income families by providing new high quality, sustainable homes for council rent. The energy efficiency will be high meaning lower fuel bills for the council tenants.
- 3.7 Residents living in the Abbey Ward are in the bottom 3 deciles of crime risk, which measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at a local level. The development will be built to Secure by Design standard to address this.
- 3.8 Barnwell is divided by the road network and a poorly designed junction. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is developing proposals on the Eastern Approaches to Cambridge. Newmarket Road is at the centre of this. The priority is improved pedestrian, cycle and bus movement. There have been two stages of public consultation.
- 3.9 There are two options for the Newmarket Road / Barnwell Road junction. Both options involve reductions in the space taken by the highways (there may be limited realignments required) and improved pedestrian movement around the junction. The preferred option involving lights creates the greater reduction. Following the consultations that have taken place GCP hope for a decision in October.
- 3.10 A major long-term impact is likely to be the proposed relocation of the airport. Some key local objectives – for example a secondary school – will only happen in this context but there is also a danger of the area being ‘left behind’. Some elements of new development are already coming forward notably the Marleigh development. Land North of Cherry Hinton and Land South of Coldhams Lane can also come forward ahead of airport relocation.

#### **4 Report funded by One Public Estate**

- 4.1 The Community Development Team carried out some survey work on needs in the mid-2010s. Some funding was then secured from One Public Estate for further work on priorities and potential for the area. An interim report was sent to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in September 2021. The following graphic illustrates the responses to the consultation.



4.2 Following further engagement with local stakeholders in 2020/21 the final version report is attached as Appendix 1. The focus remains on the core central area around the junction and on the Ekin Road estate. Proposals for the Ekin Road estate are being considered separately and consultation with the residents is in progress (see below).

## 5.1 Masterplan Objectives

A series of key projects for the regeneration of East Barnwell have been identified. These objectives underpin the vision and strategies in Chapter 6, and seek to deliver up to 400 new homes, a new centre, improved connections and recreation areas.

### 1. A Regenerated Local Centre

Creation of a revitalised local centre with a mix of residential, community, employment, retail and leisure uses, including space for independent retailers and improved local amenity space.

### 2. Newmarket Road Corridor Enhancements

Upgrades to the Newmarket Road Corridor to reduce the dominance of this highway on the surrounding built area. Considerations to include walking, cycling priority, planting and biodiversity measures, drainage, lighting and wayfinding.

### 3. Potential Areas of Growth

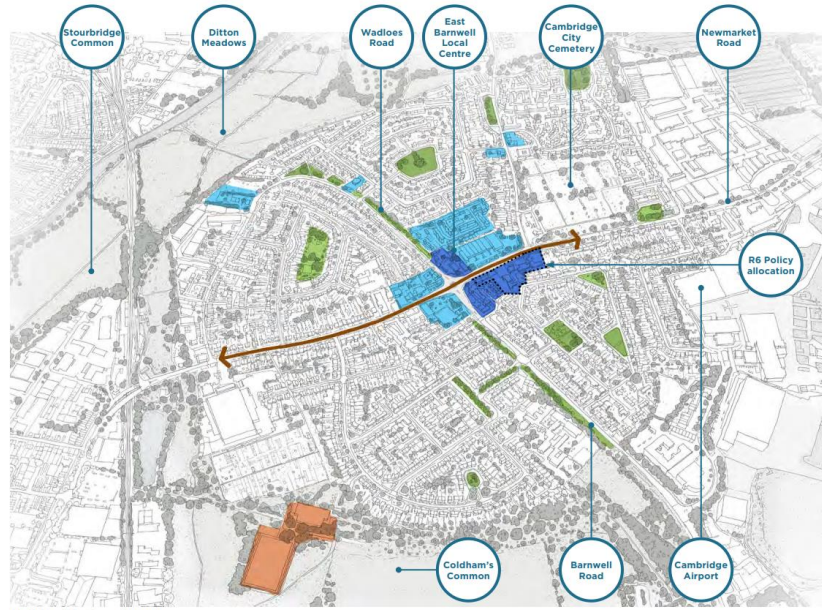
Potential regeneration sites to deliver a mix of new homes and other uses.

### 4. Abbey Leisure Complex Expansion

Enhancements to the Abbey Leisure Complex accessed off Whitehill Road, including provision for a new outdoor sports pitches/facilities.

### 5. A Connected Place

A network of enhanced open spaces, to promote walking, cycling and aid health and wellbeing. Biodiversity measures should be considered to green spaces.



## 5 Ekin Road

5.1 The regeneration project at Ekin Road is being developed in parallel with the proposals for the area south of Newmarket Road. A consultation event in June, aimed at the residents of the 122 homes on the estate, was well attended. 112 people attended on the day and 11 attended the follow-up webinar.

5.2 There were 57 responses to the survey. Many useful suggestions and feedback were received and some key statistics from the survey includes:

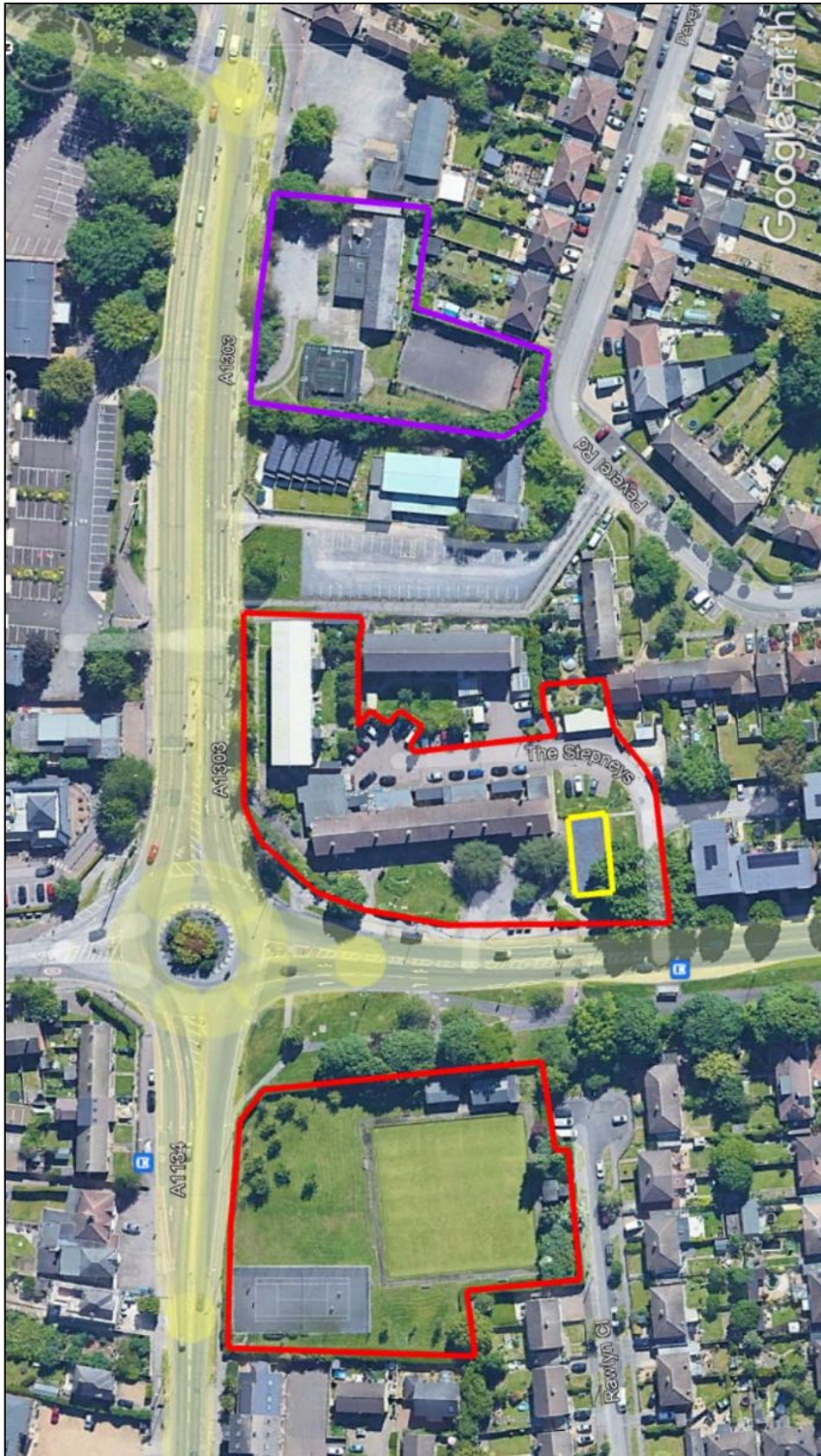
- Over 80% of people strongly agree or agree that Ekin Road is in need of redevelopment. Broken down:
  - 30 residents in flats agree or strongly agree
  - 15 residents in houses agree or strongly agree
  - 4 residents in flats disagree or are neutral
  - 3 residents in houses disagree or are neutral
  - 18 responses from house residents were submitted out of a total 42 within the estate area
  - 34 responses from flat residents were submitted out of a total of 80 within the estate area
- 62% of respondents would like to see new play areas in the public spaces if Ekin Road is redeveloped.
- 12 people would be interested in being part of a regeneration steering group.

- 5.3 The majority of those who expressed opposition are residents in some of the houses on the estate. A campaign has been launched by some of those opposed to the redevelopment of Ekin Road. The challenges involved in redeveloping or refurbishing the blocks of flats only will be further explained and explored in the next stage of the consultation.
- 5.4 In September, we will also reach out to those interested in being part of a steering group alongside engagement with residents and absent owners of the properties on the estate. The aim is to report with a proposal to Housing Scrutiny Committee in January 2023.

## **6 Joint working between City and County Councils**

- 6.1 From April 2022 meetings between the County Council and the City Council have considered the opportunity for both local authorities to work together. Both the County Council and the City Council have had a long-term engagement with the area. Both are focussed on the need for delivery and aware of the element of 'consultation fatigue' locally.
- 6.2 The aim is, through joint working, to enable the comprehensive regeneration of the East Barnwell local centre and the delivery of new community, library, pre-school and commercial facilities alongside new homes.
- 6.3 Noting the importance of delivery highlighted by the consultation responses it was agreed to focus on land which the two Councils control. This form of public sector intervention is a familiar model for driving the broader regeneration of deprived area. There are greater public benefits through comprehensive regeneration, improved financial viability and reliable delivery.
- 6.4 The sites are as shown on the below Google Earth® image:
- The East Barnwell Community Centre is the land edged purple.
  - The Barnwell Road Library is the building edged yellow.





- The City Council's land is shown in red and includes the bowls club and tennis court, the local centre, the surrounding land and flats over the shops, and the flats at 634-656 Newmarket Road

### The County Council scheme

- 6.5 The County scheme has been the subject of local consultation and includes:
- Community Centre
  - Library
  - Pre-School provision
  - Homes
- 6.6 The outline specifications drawn up in discussion with local groups have been taken as the base for the proposal now being developed. This will be taken forward through further consultation.
- 6.7 Following local consultation the County Council agreed that the pre-school centre should return to the site from its current location at Galfrid School and has an agreed view that this should be accepted. There is a MUGA on the site which the County proposed to deal with through a financial contribution, but a site had not been identified.
- 6.8 The original scheme involved four owners and an allocation in the Local Plan was secured (Proposal ref: R6). Extensive discussions between the County and Christ the Redeemer Church to deliver a joint scheme broke down some years ago. The LPA has required any partial scheme to assess the impact on the allocated site as a whole.

### Priorities

- 6.9 Subsequent pre-application discussions have focussed on key issues, constraints and the relationships of the proposals to planning policy.
- 6.10 The following priorities have emerged from the discussions with planners and local stakeholders:
- The implementation of the junction and traffic improvements proposed by the GCP.
  - A stronger presence of buildings on Newmarket Road / Barnwell Road to reduce the sense of traffic domination and make the presence of the community more felt.
  - Improved spaces sheltered from the highways for access and open space with routes through for pedestrian and cyclists but not including any through vehicle traffic.
  - Retaining and improving community and commercial facilities in the area.

- Improve access for people with disabilities to all the facilities, the open spaces and the new homes.
- Retaining trees where possible, balancing losses against the benefits of development where removal of trees is considered.
- Securing 20% net gain in biodiversity (over and above planning aim of 10%).
- Seeking to identify ways to create employment opportunities for the local people through development of a mixed-use hub.
- Building on the sense of community across Barnwell and identify needs and ways to address them beyond the immediate sites where they cannot be included.

#### Developing a deliverable masterplan

6.11 Developing a deliverable masterplan requires that it:

- Incorporates new library and preschool facilities for the County Council and new community facilities to re-provide those within the East Barnwell Centre.
- Delivers in the region of 135 – 150 new homes to subsidise the cost of providing the new library, pre-school and community facilities.
- Informs a strategy for relocating the bowls club, tennis court and MUGA off-site.
- Provides the basis of pre-application discussions with planning and urban design officers to test the acceptability of the proposals.
- Assesses the pros and cons of both Councils combining their land assets into a single masterplan or delivering these separately.
- Forms the basis of stakeholder and public consultations.

6.12 The delivery of a new centre has faced long delays and delivery is now a priority. Since 2017 Cambridge Investment Partnership has achieved planning approval for 1,045 homes across 24 sites and completed and occupied more than 200 new homes. 11 developments have been completed and fully occupied and a further 8 developments are under construction, with those remaining due to start within the next six months.

6.13 This includes delivery of mixed-use schemes. Community centres are completed or under construction at Akeman Street, Mill Road, Campkin Road and the Meadows; the Meadows includes a pre-school facility, and a nursery is under construction at Cromwell Road. Schemes at Akeman Street and Colville Road include local shops.

- 6.14 Options for the long-term ownership and management of the community centre are under consideration.

### Heads of Terms

- 6.15 The Heads of Terms have not been finalised and the structure of agreements and transfers between the three parties (Cambridgeshire County Council, the City Council and CIP) remains to be determined but key principles have been agreed.
- Land held by the Councils will be transferred to the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) under a development agreement.
  - CIP will have obligations in relation to delivering the development within agreed parameters and, except for houses that are sold to private buyers, assets will be returned to the Councils either freehold or under long leases.
  - The County Council will make a fixed financial contribution and CIP will bear the development risk.

### Timetable

- w/c 15-22 August – Committee papers prepared
- 20 September – County Council Strategy & Resources Committee
- 22 September – City Council Housing Scrutiny Committee
- February 2023 – Planning application submission
- Early 2024 – Start on Site
- Early 2025 Completion of Community Centre

## **7 Public engagement**

- 7.1 There has been engagement over a period with these and other stakeholders through the One Public Estate process and through the development of the 'Statement of Principles' for allocated site R6 in conjunction with the LPA.

- 7.2 These discussions have covered some key issues including:

- Relationship of allocated site R6 to the Local Centre and to The Stepneys
- Relationship to proposed changes in the highways network
- Urban design principles in relation to access, height and massing
- Relocation of the Bowls Club
- Redistribution of the Protected Open Space including improvements in quality and access

- 7.3 These are key issues to resolve in accordance with the programme outlined above but considerable progress has been made in generating a shared understanding of the issues and identifying the outline of potential solutions.

7.4 On the basis of the joint working between the Councils, the following public consultation events have been held:

- a stand at the Abbey People Big Lunch on the afternoon of Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June
- a consultation event afternoon into early evening Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July had to be postponed due to the extreme heat on that day but an-online meeting with some of the stakeholders was held instead
- the original stakeholder group for the East Barnwell Community Centre met on 20<sup>th</sup> July
- stand at the Peverel Road community safety event on 9<sup>th</sup> August
- drop-in public event located on Christ the Redeemer carpark on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August
- An online webinar session on the evening of Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August
- a further drop-in event at Christ the Redeemer carpark on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August

#### Feedback from the consultation

A report is attached at Appendix 5.

77 people responded to the survey. Of these 42 (55%) strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal and 27 disagreed or strongly disagreed (35%). 8 (10%) were neutral.

There were many detailed comments which will be taken into account as the scheme progresses.

#### Future consultation plans

7.5 Following the successful consultation events held throughout August 2022, we plan to continue community engagement as this project evolves. More detail will be shared with stakeholders and the public later in the year as we work towards a planning application.

## **8 Sustainability**

8.1 Social:

- Joint working could enable a significant regeneration that addresses many of the key issues with the existing local centre, improving the quality of life for Abbey residents and providing a vibrant new mixed-use hub for the local community.
- New affordable housing will help to meet local need.

8.2 Economic:

- A new mixed-use hub with purpose-built facilities will provide a significantly improved offer for local businesses and more local job opportunities. This could also provide a platform for new businesses to start.
- Construction of the new facilities and homes will provide significant numbers of new job opportunities.

### 8.3 Environmental:

- Homes built of Passivhaus principles with enhanced fabric.
- Gas Free, likely with air source heat pumps (ASHPs).
- BREEAM Excellent library, pre-school, community facility and commercial
- 20% biodiversity gain will be targeted.
- Improved water efficiency of 90-100 litres per person per dwelling.
- 50-100% of parking spaces to have active Electric Vehicle charging points.

## 9 Finance

- 9.1 The Council will support the development of the project through its participation in the Cambridge Investment Partnership. Housing provided on the site will include 40% affordable housing. A separate report on the purchase of this housing through the Housing Revenue Account will be submitted.
- 9.2 The County Council will make a financial contribution of £500,000. The development risk will be carried by CIP.
- 9.3 While the aim is for the scheme to finance the community facilities and the replacement commercial facilities the requirement for a contribution from the General Fund will be assessed once the extent of the facilities and costs have been finalised and a further report will be submitted.
- 9.4 The scheme relies upon £255,000 funding from S106. The total sum is generated by a number of contributions each of which has its own deadline for spend. This creates a requirement to meet the timetable attached to each S106 contribution so the sum will reduce over time if funds that have an earlier deadline have to be reallocated. The sum is not tied to a specific project but it is specifically for the provision of additional community meeting spaces.

## 10 Implications

### (a) Staffing Implications

The scheme will be developed by the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) which is a 50-50 partnership. The Council will deliver its role in the development through the Housing Development Agency which will provide the Council's staffing contribution to the development of the scheme. The engagement with the community, tenants and leaseholders is very time-consuming across this and other

schemes and needs to be properly resourced. A proposal for growth to adequately resource this is within the MTFS.

(b) Equality and Poverty Implications

A scheme specific EQIA has been completed and is awaiting approval.

(c) Environmental Implications

A Climate Change Rating Tool Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed development and has been Approved by the Councils Climate Change Officer. This development is confirmed as having a Net Low Positive impact to the City in light of its linkage directly to the councils sustainability objectives.

(d) Procurement Implications

The scheme will be delivered by the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP). This will be a mixed tenure scheme. The land will be transferred to CIP with the affordable housing being purchased from CIP by the HRA. The process will be as set out in 19/42/HSC Approval for CIP scheme delivery routes.

(e) Community Safety Implications

The scheme will be built in accordance to Secure by Design guidelines as set out within the City Councils Design Brief.

(f) Consultation and communication considerations

There has been communication with residents prior to this report being presented.

There has been consultation through events and on an individual basis since the autumn of 2019 as set out in this report. This engagement will continue.

There has been consultation with Ward Councillors about the proposals.

Consultation and communication with existing tenants and leaseholders will continue in accordance with the City Council's Home Loss Policy This policy along with National Policy sets out the Council's commitment to those affected by regeneration and the compensation and support available.

The HDA continues to liaise closely with colleagues in City Homes, to ensure timely and accurate information is made available to all parties affected by the proposal.

There will be formal consultation through the planning process

## 11 Risks

11.1 Below is a table setting out key risks

<b>East Barnwell Risk Register</b>						
	<b>Risk area</b>		<b>Risk Mitigation</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Agreement between principals</b>	For the scheme to proceed the City Council and the County Council each need to sign a development agreement with CIP by November 2022.	Agree principles and delegations Septembers 2022. Identify and resolve potential issues in legal agreements at an early stage. Ensure compliance with governing legislation.	3	5	15
<b>2</b>	<b>Agreements with other parties</b>	A range of organisations are involved including the Bowls Clubs, community providers, commercial leaseholders and residential leaseholders and tenants. Varying levels of agreement are required.	Engage individually with the various parties. Identify and work to resolve issues identified.	4	4	16
<b>3</b>	<b>Planning Constraints</b>	There are a range of planning policy issues and constraints to address including the local centre, community provision, open space trees, highways and others. Each carry a risk to the scheme as a potential ground for objection or limitation that would make the scheme undeliverable.	Pre-application discussions to identify constraints and ways in which issues can be resolved to enable a planning application to be submitted with positive prospects for approval.	2	5	10
<b>4</b>	<b>Replacement facilities for MUGA and Tennis Court</b>	The nature and location of replacement facilities has not yet been decided.	Identify options and consult of the nature and location of replacement provision.	2	4	8



<b>5</b>	<b>Cost increases and viability</b>	Risk that costs will escalate beyond present cost estimates in relation to the value of the development. The Council may need to consider funding elements of the community provision and determine how to finance the renewal of the commercial premises if these fall outside a viable scheme appraisal.	Major development risk is carried by CIP. Profit is built in across CIP schemes to offset this risk. The potential for costs for community services and commercial premises to require funding to be identified and funding agreed prior to commitment.	3	4	12
<b>6</b>	<b>S106 funding</b>	Risk of delay causing loss of S106 funding.	Maintain progress against programme. Monitor S106 commitments with relevant officers.	3	3	9
<b>7</b>	<b>GCP scheme</b>	Local feedback has stressed the importance of the GCP road improvements to the feasibility of the scheme.	Continuing engagement with GCP and local representations.	2	4	8

## 12 Background papers

19/42/HSC Approval for CIP scheme delivery routes  
24<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020 HSC Agenda Item 13: East Cambridge Development & Regeneration Project: Masterplan for East Barnwell.

## 13 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Framework for Change Report  
Appendix 2 – Cambridge City Council ownership Plan  
Appendix 3 – Cambridgeshire County Council ownership Plan  
Appendix 4 – Abbey Leisure Centre overflow Car park  
Appendix 5 – Report on consultation

## 14 Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jim Pollard, Housing Development Agency, tel: 01223 457924, email: jim.pollard@cambridge.gov.uk