

Purpose of the briefing and background

The purpose of this briefing note is to advise Planning Committee Members of a forthcoming full planning application for the proposed construction of 70 homes (including 28 affordable homes- 40%).

The proposed scheme is being presented to the planning committee members following a series of pre-application meetings and a Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel assessment.

The Site

The site is located on Histon Road in the Arbury Ward, approx. 1km north of the city centre. There are residential uses adjacent to the south and west, the ATS garage use adjoins the site and the Histon Road Recreation Ground abuts the southern boundary.

The site is approximately 1.18 hectares, the southern half of the application site was previously occupied by Murketts car dealership and the northern half of the site consists of an unused workshop area which is located to the rear of the ATS commercial unit.

The site is outside of but immediately adjacent to the Castle and Victoria Conservation Area. The site is subject to an Area Tree Preservation order.

Principle of Development

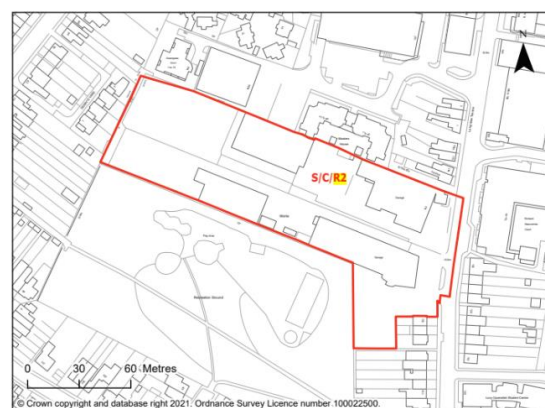
The entirety of the proposed application site is located within the R2 allocation of the Cambridge City Local Plan 2018, this allocation is for 78 dwellings. The R2 allocation also includes the entire ATS site which fronts onto Histon Road, the proposed application site excludes ATS which is proposed to continue operating as a tyre repair business.

The R2 allocation within the current local plan (Cambridge Local Plan 2018) identified the site as having a capacity of 78 dwellings based on an initial assessment as part of the plan making process. Deducting the completed dwellings at 149 Histon Road and at 149B Histon Road leaves an indicative capacity for the remaining undeveloped part of this allocation of 42 dwellings. However, the Emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan under allocation reference S/C/R2: Willowcroft, 137-143 Histon Road proposes to allocate the site with a revised capacity of 110 dwellings. Therefore, subject to a detailed design and assessment being carried out a greater number of dwellings which exceeds the current allocation may be acceptable. Given the sites allocation within the existing and emerging local plan the principle of a residential development on the site is supported.

Cambridge City Local Plan 2018



Greater Cambridge Emerging Local Plan- allocation S/C/R2



S/C/R2: Willowcroft, 137-143 Histon Road

Affordable housing

In accordance with policy 45 the proposed development includes the provision of 40% affordable homes (75% of the affordable provision at 60% of market rent and 25% at 80% of market rent). The current layout includes 25 affordable units within an apartment block at the entrance to the site and a further 3 affordable homes (3 bedroom, 5 person homes) within the site.

During the course of the pre application meetings the three affordable homes have been relocated to ensure they are well integrated within the development.

The affordable housing proposed includes a cluster of 25 affordable homes. This exceeds the CCC policy position set out in Annex 10 where it is recommended that clusters of up to 15 units are suitable for applications between 30 and 200 homes. Annex 10 states (at paragraph 16) that there may be site specific considerations which justify an exception to this guidance. In this instance the proposed delivery of a larger cluster is considered acceptable for the following reasons; the application includes a mix of affordable rented tenures within the apartment block, there are two blocks of affordable accommodation immediately to the north of the application site, the design quality of the apartment block will ensure it is tenure blind and the proposal will deliver a more efficient management arrangement than the delivery of separate blocks of affordable accommodation.

Overall, the scheme is considered to be in accordance with policy 45 as the scheme proposes to deliver 40% affordable homes within a balanced mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures to meet the needs within Cambridge. This will contribute to the strategic objective of increasing the delivery of homes, and in particular affordable housing to meet housing need. In the planning balance the delivery of a policy compliant scheme in terms of the number of affordable homes outweighs the harm caused by an exceedance of the clustering guidance by 10 residential units and as such the proposed development is considered to comply with policy 45 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

Site opportunities

- Deliver a high quality residential development on a vacant brownfield site which is located in a sustainable location.
- Provide enhancements to the Histon Road recreation ground (landscape improvements, biodiversity enhancements, improve connectivity and increase natural surveillance over the recreation ground).
- Deliver much needed affordable housing in the City Centre for local people.

Background

The proposals are currently at pre-application stage with a formal application to be submitted in due course. The applicants have worked collaboratively with officers and key stakeholders since pre application discussions commenced on 26th June 2023. To date, the proposal has been subject to 4 pre application meetings with the Council, several specialist workshops and a Design Review Panel. Public engagement has also been carried out by the applicants.

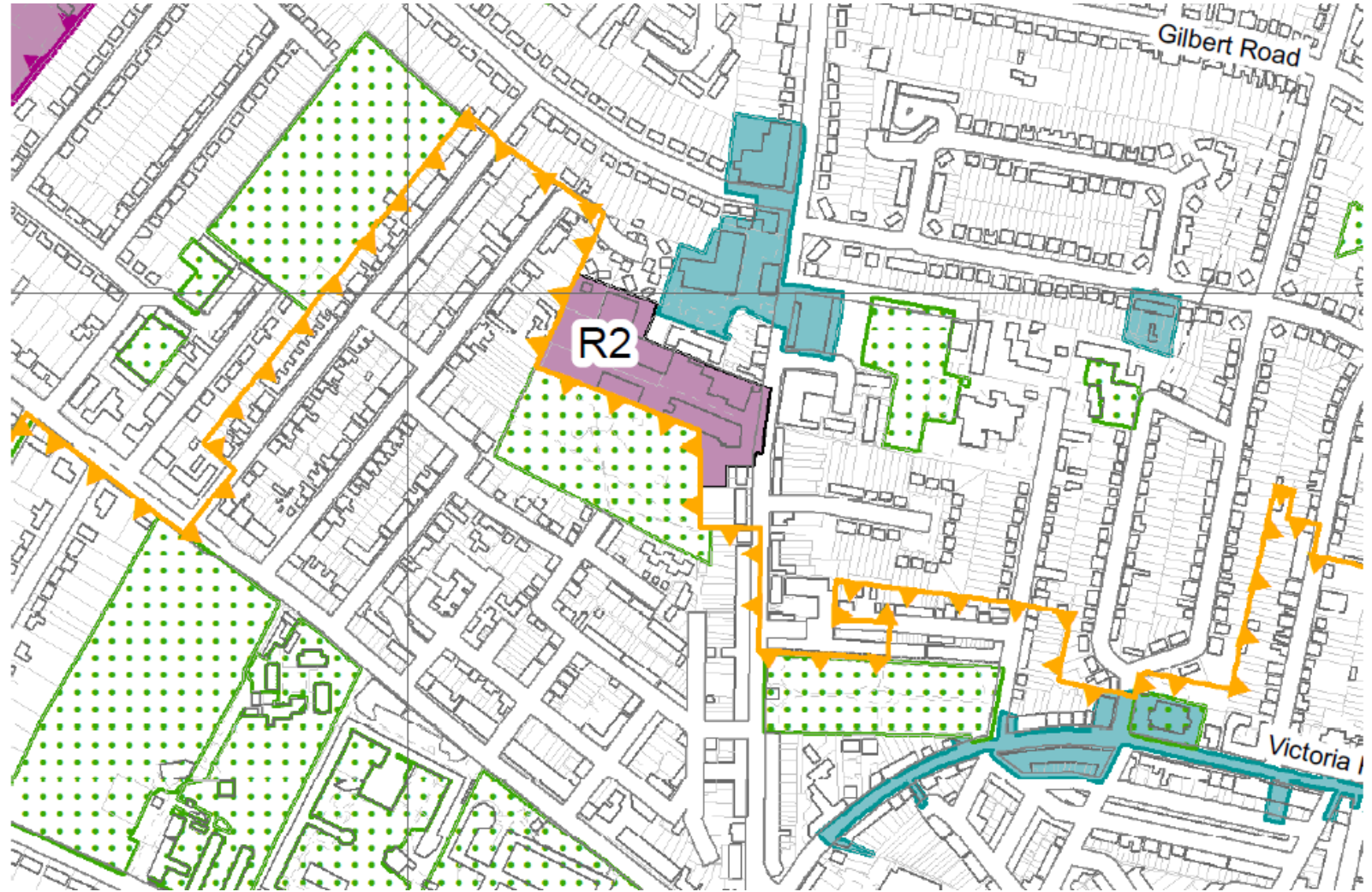
Appendix 2- Housing Tenure Plan



Appendix 3- Planning Constraints Map

Key

-  Cambridge City Boundary
-  Conservation Area
-  Protected Open Space
-  Open Space - North West Cambridge Area Action Plan
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest
-  City Wildlife, County Wildlife and Local Nature Reserve
-  Green Belt
-  Strategic District Heating Area
-  Cambridge Airport Public Safety Zone
-  City Centre
-  Primary Shopping Frontage
-  Secondary Shopping Frontage
-  Primary Shopping Area
-  District, Local or Neighbourhood Centre
-  Protected Industrial Site
-  Indicative Boundary of National Geological Interest (inc. 10m buffer)
-  Disposal Site
-  Major Development - North West Cambridge Area Action Plan
-  City Safeguarded Land
-  Opportunity Area
-  Area of Major Change
-  Area Action Plan
- MINERAL AND WASTE SAFEGUARDING**
-  Mineral Safeguarding Area - Sand and Gravel
-  Allocation
-  Area of Search
-  Existing Site
-  Transport Safeguarding Area
-  Waste Consultation Area
-  Waste Water Treatment Works Safeguarding Area



Appendix 4- Proposed aerial view

