



**Draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework
Supplementary Planning Document**

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCREENING REPORT

JULY 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The City Council as the Local Planning Authority has been working in partnership with local stakeholders to prepare a framework for change in the Mitcham's Corner area. This culminated in the development of the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document which was approved for consultation at Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee on 21 July 2016.
- 1.2. The SPD provides a framework to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications and re-development within the Opportunity Area. The draft SPD has been prepared to support Policy 21: Mitcham's Corner Opportunity Area as set out in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission (hereafter referred to as the Draft Cambridge Local Plan 2014) and the Schedule of Proposed Changes following Proposed Submission consultation. The Opportunity Area includes the Draft Local Plan 2014 housing allocation of Henry Giles House (Site R4).
- 1.3. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a plan, and alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. The purpose of SA is to ensure that the potential sustainability effects of a plan are addressed through an assessment of the sustainability impacts of objectives, actions, policies, allocations and their alternatives at an early stage in plan preparation. It is a requirement that SA is undertaken in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which were prepared in order to transpose into national law the requirements of the EU Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Directive¹.
- 1.4. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required that all Local Development Documents, including development plan documents (now local plans) and SPDs be subject to SA prior to publication. Alterations to Section 19(5) of the 2004 Act under the Planning Act 2008 removed the requirements for local planning authorities to produce an SA for SPDs. The rationale behind this is that SPDs do not provide any new policies or site allocations, but provide supplementary guidance relating to policies set out in overarching local plans that will have been subject to an SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive. See section 2 below for the policy context for the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD.
- 1.5. However, an SPD may occasionally be found likely to give rise to significant effects which have not been formally assessed in the context of a higher-level planning document. Therefore, local planning authorities need to screen their SPDs to ensure that the legal requirements for SA are met where there are impacts that have not been covered in the appraisal of the parent plan or where an assessment is required by the SEA Directive.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC

- 1.6. Cambridge City Council does not consider that an SA/SEA is likely to be required for the purpose of the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD as outlined in this report, which sets out the assessment on which the Council's screening opinion is based.

2. DRAFT MITCHAM'S CORNER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SPD

- 2.1. The intention to establish strategic planning and development guidelines for Mitcham's Corner has been an ambition of the Council since the initial development of the Mitcham's Corner Area Strategic Planning and Development Brief in 2003. In 2012, during the Council's Issues and Options Report Consultation, a number of representations were submitted suggesting the need for Mitcham's Corner to be designated an Opportunity Area. This intention was subsequently carried forward into the Draft Cambridge Local Plan 2014 and established through Policy 21: Mitcham's Corner Opportunity Area. The Opportunity Area includes the Draft Local Plan 2014 housing allocation of Henry Giles House (Site R4).
- 2.2. The Mitcham's Corner Opportunity Area (Figure 1) lies within the northern edge of the extended Central Conservation Area and is approximately 10 minutes' walk from the city centre. The area owes its name to Charles Mitcham, who owned a draper's shop on the corner of Chesterton Road and Victoria Avenue from the early-to mid-20th century. Today, the name is associated with the gyratory system that radically changed the area in the 1970s. The one-way system has left the backs of terraces exposed, created an unpleasant and difficult environment for pedestrians and cyclists, and has come to dominate and erode the character of the area. Despite the challenges, a diverse mix of services and small independent shops exist within the area, surrounded by a vibrant community.
- 2.3. The key issues and opportunities for the site have been identified as follows:
- Create a low-speed environment to help restore the balance between people and vehicles;
 - Emphasise 'place making' over vehicle movement, in particular at junctions, through the use of tighter geometry – by removing or revising the existing gyratory system;
 - Reinforce or re-establish historic routes and create opportunities for new public spaces;
 - Create a more comfortable and simplified pedestrian environment by providing wider pavements and more street trees, removing pedestrian guardrails and unnecessary signage.
- 2.4. Policy 21: Mitcham's Corner Opportunity Area states the intention of the Council to create a Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document for the area², which must be approved before any major planning application is submitted.
- 2.5. The draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD has now been developed in partnership with local stakeholders. The SPD provides a framework to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications and redevelopment within the Opportunity Area.

² As illustrated through proposed modifications in the Council's CC2 Matter Statement to support the Local Plan Examination hearing sessions in June 2016 (https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cc2_ccc_statement_and_appendices.pdf).

3. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Firstly, the screening process must ascertain whether the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD gives rise to significant environmental effects, using the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 3.2 Paragraph 10 of the SEA Directive only requires SEA for plans which 'determine the use of small areas at a local level' or which are 'minor modifications' to plans, when these are determined to be likely to cause significant environmental effects. Therefore, the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as listed in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been reviewed to determine whether the exception applies to the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework Site SPD.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 sets out the findings of this assessment, which clearly demonstrate that the draft SPD does not require an SEA, beyond that already undertaken for the draft SPD's parent policy and site allocation contained within the appraisal of the Cambridge Local Plan 2014.

4. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Government guidance³ suggests that where an authority has made a determination that a plan is unlikely to have any significant environmental effect, and is therefore exempt from the SEA Directive, it must consider whether there are likely to be any significant economic or social effects. As such, the second stage in the screening process considers whether the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD gives rise to significant economic or social effects. If these have been formally assessed in the context of higher level policies or allocations in local plans, then it is unlikely that significant social and economic effects will arise as a result of the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD.
- 4.2 The parent policy (Policy 21) and site allocation (Site R4) of relevance to this SPD are contained in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014, which was appraised during its preparation and the appraisal results reported on⁴. The SA assessed the parent policy and site allocation against a range of social, economic and environmental 'sustainability objectives' using a range of indicators to consider the contribution they made towards the achievement of various sustainability objectives.

³ ODPM, Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, 2005.

⁴ Sustainability Appraisal of the Cambridge Local Plan 2014. Volume 1: Final Appraisal for Submission to the Secretary of State. March 2014

4.3 In terms of the assessment of Policy 21, the main findings of the appraisal were as follows:

- In requiring improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure in an attempt to achieve modal shift towards sustainable modes of transport. Policy 21 should rebalance the road network in favour of walking and cycling by removing/remodelling the gyratory. This should result in significant positive effects in terms of encouraging public transport, walking and cycling whilst also increasing access to employment opportunities from more deprived parts of the city.
- In seeking to provide positive effects on community wellbeing, policy 21, alongside other policies in the plan should lead to positive effects on community and wellbeing through providing housing, leisure, retail and employment opportunities. Policy 21 seeks to rebalance the road network in favour of walking and cycling by removing/remodelling the gyratory. This should improve accessibility both in and out of the area and ensure that new employment opportunities are within easy reach. These provisions should result in significant positive effects in terms of encouraging public transport, walking and cycling whilst also increasing access to employment opportunities from more deprived parts of the city.
- Mitcham's Corner (Policy 21) criterion (c) states that development proposals should create opportunities for new public spaces. Mitcham's Corner is at the southern extent of Arbury ward which should increase open space provision for residents. Taken as a whole, policies in the plan should increase open space provision in North Cambridge – particularly in Arbury – and should lead to significant positive effects.
- Redevelopment proposals within the Mitcham's Corner Opportunity Area (Policy 21) which deliver a mix of uses including local shops and services with residential at upper floors. This could lead to positive effects in terms of encouraging regeneration and attracting investment, which in turn could lead to additional employment opportunities for the residents of the area. The main aim of the Opportunity Area is to improve the quality and character of the area and create a 'sense of place' which should make the area more vibrant, restoring the balance between people and vehicles. The 1970s gyratory system has created an unpleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists which is difficult to navigate and has eroded the character of the area. Public realm improvements aim to create a low speed environment giving pedestrians and cyclists greater priority, de-cluttering the street scene and creating opportunities for new public spaces. As such the Opportunity Area should lead to significant positive effects in terms of encouraging high quality design and public realm in this area of the city.

4.4 In terms of the site allocation, the appraisal of site R4 is set out in table 1 below. For the majority of sustainability objectives the allocation was considered to have

positive effects, and any negative effects related to issues such as air quality could be mitigated by other policies contained within the plan.

Table 1: Sustainability Appraisal of site R4 (Henry Giles House)

Cumulative effects and possible mitigation measures

Nine sites are located in the North Cambridge functional area and comprise four residential, three employment, one mixed use and one residential mooring site, although following Issues and Options 2 consultation, the three employment allocations have been removed as these will be dealt with through the Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan. One further site – Broad Location 10: Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road – is also included within this appraisal and lies to the north west of the North Cambridge Functional Area boundary in South Cambridgeshire. The site is proposed for residential and commercial use or a community stadium. Should all four residential sites, in combination with the proposed site in the fringe, be built out for residential use, this area of Cambridge could gain up to 740 new homes.

Apart from one site, all sites perform well against the economic related sustainability issue. The mix of sites within this functional area, in particular the employment and commercial sites and the mixed use site will provide employment opportunities and should help address local deprivation issues. All sites are within or adjacent to the 40% most deprived Super Output Areas within Cambridge. Furthermore, with nearly 30% of all potential sites there is the opportunity on North Cambridge to capitalise on the inward investment that development of these sites would bring which may help trigger wider regeneration activities across the whole functional area. Although the allocation of employment sites has been removed from the Local Plan, these sites will be included within the Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan, which will allocate sites for employment and include specific policies related to the development of this area.

In terms of the environmental related sustainability issues, the sites perform well. In particular, no site is identified at risk of fluvial flooding and although some sites are identified as at risk from surface water flooding, there is the potential to mitigate this through careful design. While the majority of the city sites are on previously developed land and will not result in impacts on the Green Belt, the fringe site is in the Green Belt and is predicted to have an adverse impact. On balance, the sites perform well against the biodiversity and green infrastructure related sustainability issues which should help maintain access to leisure and open space provision and contribute to the high quality of the public realm. Only one significant constraint is identified relating to a tree preservation order on one site. Apart from the City Football Ground site, all sites have the potential to increase onsite publicly accessible open space. All sites are also within easy access to sports facilities for adults and children.

All sites perform well and are largely unconstrained in relation to protecting Cambridge's townscape and historic environment and no impacts are identified for national nature conservation designations, national heritage assets, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens or buildings of local interest. Only two sites were identified to have potential impacts on the local conservation area – one site is located adjacent to, and one within the Central Conservation area. It is unlikely that these sites would support the achievement of identified priorities within the Chesterton/Ferry Lane and De Freville Conservation Areas. The extent to which development will encompass high quality design and improve the quality of the public realm is unclear at this stage.

Only two city sites (both residential) and the fringe site are identified to have access to high quality public transport; however North Cambridge is expected to benefit from significant public transport improvement in the future with the new Cambridge Science Park railway station, links to the guided bus and associated improvements to cycling infrastructure. Three of the residential sites are considered to have very poor cycling infrastructure provision. Furthermore, apart from the site at Fen Road, all sites are within or adjacent to, or less than 1,000m from an AQMA. Three of the residential sites would be expected to result in a worsening of air quality. In order to mitigate the potential reliance on the private car and help improve local air quality, significant targeted investment in public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure will be required.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The designation of Mitcham's Corner as an opportunity area and site R4: Henry Giles House as a residential allocation took place as part of the process of developing the Draft Cambridge Local Plan 2014, and as such has been subject to SA as part of the Local Plan process. The conclusion of this screening process is that as the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD does not make any changes to this allocation, or the policy guidance contained within Policy 21 of the Plan, it will not give rise to significant environmental effects.
- 5.2 The draft Mitcham's Corner SPD does not give rise to significant social and economic effects beyond those already identified as part of the appraisal of the parent policy and site allocation contained within the Cambridge Local Plan 2014. As such it is not considered necessary to undertake a separate SA for this SPD.

Appendix 1: Screening in relation to Schedule 1 Criteria of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

The characteristics of the Draft Mitcham's Corner SPD having regard to	
(1a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	Allocation of the Mitcham's Corner Opportunity area and Site R4: Henry Giles House forms part of the Local Plan process, which has been subject to SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive. The draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD provides a Vision and Objectives for future redevelopment of the site, identifying the constraints and opportunities that will shape this development. The draft SPD does not set specific requirements in relation to the nature and scale of this development with the exception of reference to the allocation R4 and the Draft Cambridge Local Plan 2014 capacity requirements. The draft SPD provides suggested scale and massing for the development and further guidance to form the basis of discussion for the submission of planning applications on the site consistent with policies in the Draft Local Plan 2014. The draft SPD also provides suggested scale and massing for the development and further guidance to form the basis of discussion for the submission of planning applications for the Staples site consistent with policies in the Draft Local Plan 2014. Final decisions relating to scale and massing will be determined through the development management process.
(1b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD sits at the bottom of the plan hierarchy and as such is influenced by plans higher up the hierarchy (i.e. the Draft Cambridge Local Plan 2014), for which it provides additional guidance. While it will influence the development of planning applications, policies higher up in the plan hierarchy are the key determining factor for the development of the site.
(1c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to	The draft SPD has relevance to the promotion of sustainable development as part of the development of the Mitcham's

promoting sustainable development.	<p>Corner Opportunity Area. Sitting alongside policies contained in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014, the SPD, once adopted, will help to ensure that any future development safeguards the architectural, urban, historic, cultural and archaeological importance of the site while providing an opportunity for positive change. Development of the site presents the opportunity to enhance environmental sustainability including energy efficiency, increased ecology and biodiversity and enhanced health and wellbeing for those using and visiting the site. Overall, the draft SPD therefore contributes positively to the integration of environmental considerations.</p>
(1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	<p>There are no specific environmental problems that are of relevance to the draft SPD, although the vision for the draft SPD includes the promotion of measures to physically ‘green’ the area and encourage water sensitive urban design. These measures include integrated water management solutions, which are consistent with Policy 31: Integrated Water Management and Water Cycle Policy and Policy 32: Flood Risk of the Draft Cambridge Local Plan 2014. Such enhancements would be necessary to ensure future development proposals are acceptable in planning terms.</p>
(1e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	<p>The draft SPD is not relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment. Policies contained within the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 have more relevance in relation to issues such as air quality, and these policies will be taken into consideration as part of any future development proposals for the site.</p>
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regards, in particular to	
(2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	<p>The appraisal of the parent policy and site allocation for which the draft Mitcham’s Corner Development Framework SPD provides guidance, considered that any adverse effects could be appropriately mitigated. For example, while it was noted</p>

	<p>that the site lies within an AQMA, the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, and the proximity of the site to local services and facilities could help to tackle issues related to air quality and other environmental considerations.</p>
(2b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	<p>The appraisal of the parent policy and site allocations for which the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD provides guidance, did not consider that there would be any significant cumulative effects as a result of the proposed development.</p>
(2c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects.	<p>The draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD is focussed on a discrete area, located entirely within the administrative boundary of Cambridge. As such there will be no trans-boundary effects as a result of the draft SPD.</p>
(2d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	<p>The appraisal of the parent policy and site allocation for which the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD provides guidance did raise concerns surrounding the location of the site within an AQMA, and the impact that this could have on human health. The appraisal did, however note that development of the site could present opportunities to reduce air pollution, due to the site's proximity to local bus stops linking the site to the city centre and promote walking and cycling, through the site's proximity to the City Centre.</p> <p>The SPD provides opportunities for the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, the removal/revision of the gyratory and the creation of a low speed environment to give cyclists and pedestrians greater priority, thus presenting the opportunity to mitigate existing air quality management issues.</p> <p>Development of the site also presents the opportunity to enhance environmental sustainability including energy efficiency, increased ecology and biodiversity and enhanced health and wellbeing for those</p>

	using and visiting the site.
(2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of population likely to be affected);	The draft SPD is applicable to an area of 12.5 hectares. The site is located within the wider context of Cambridge, which has a population of 128,000 within an area of approximately 4,070 hectares.
(2f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:	<p>Some of the area covered by the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD is located within the Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area (Castle and Victoria Conservation Area) and is in an area of varying archaeological potential, with high potential for medieval remains. The site contains a number of heritage assets, as identified within the draft SPD. The SPD, once adopted, alongside policies in the Local Plan will help to ensure that any future development safeguards the architectural, urban, historic, cultural and archaeological importance of the site while providing an opportunity for positive change.</p> <p>The appraisal of the parent policy and site allocation for which the draft Mitcham's Corner Development Framework SPD provides guidance did raise concerns surrounding the location of the site within an AQMA, and the impact that this could have on human health. The appraisal did, however note that development of the site could present opportunities to reduce air pollution, for example through the promotion of sustainable modes of transport. Other policies in the plan, which have also been subject to SA, give consideration to Air Quality and the need to ensure that developments do not lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity from polluting or malodorous emissions, and that there will not be any significant adverse effects from existing sources of poor air quality.</p>
(2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or protection status.	There are no areas or landscapes within the boundaries of the Mitcham's Corner Opportunity Area that have such status. The Cambridge Local Plan 2014, which contains the parent policy and site allocation of

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relevance to the draft SPD, has been subject to a Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment, which concludes that there are not likely to be any significant effects on Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites as a result of the policies and proposals contained within the plan.