



# Proposals for land at Musbury Road, Axminster

**Public Consultation – September - October 2020**

# Introduction

- This presentation show emerging proposals by ACL Properties (ACL) for developing a discount food store and residential dwellings on surplus land at the Axminster Carpets estate (Estate) fronting Musbury Road in Axminster.
- ACL is both the owner of the Estate (shown in blue) and promoter of this proposal. A team of specialist consultants have guided the proposal's formulation to meet the principle objectives of Planning Authority compliance and to guide the Estate's future success and appeal.
- Given the current restrictions on public gatherings due to Covid-19 we are running a 'virtual' public consultation for stakeholders and the community, prior to submitting a planning application later this year.



# The story so far

- Axminster Carpets is one of the main occupiers on the Estate. It has a world renowned reputation of weaving in the town since 1755 and has been trading in its current location since 1937.
- In **2018** ACL commenced a review of future business needs and opportunities for the Estate. A key objective is to ensure that Axminster Carpets has a sustainable long term future on the Estate.
- The review sought to identify how the Estate could be both consolidated and regenerated whilst identifying how wider development opportunities could be realised to enable the modernisation and reorganisation of the Axminster Carpets production.



# The story so far

- In **early 2019** planning discussions began with East Devon District Council and a pre-application enquiry was submitted in December. These discussions explored how the first phase of the Estate investment could be implemented to secure the modernisation and reorganisation of Axminster Carpets.
- In **February 2020** Axminster Carpets went into administration but was promptly rescued by a group of private investors including ACL. The carpet business was successfully sold as a going concern, safeguarding the future 30-40 people.
- The recent rescue of Axminster Carpets has not affected ACL's long-term vision for the Estate. However, it has put plans for consolidation and regeneration into sharp focus and underlined the essential need to achieve this quickly.

There is a need to relocate the carpet loom from within the Estate to the Axminster Carpets main building at a cost of £600,000. It is not sustainable or economically viable for Axminster Carpets to leave the equipment in its existing premises.

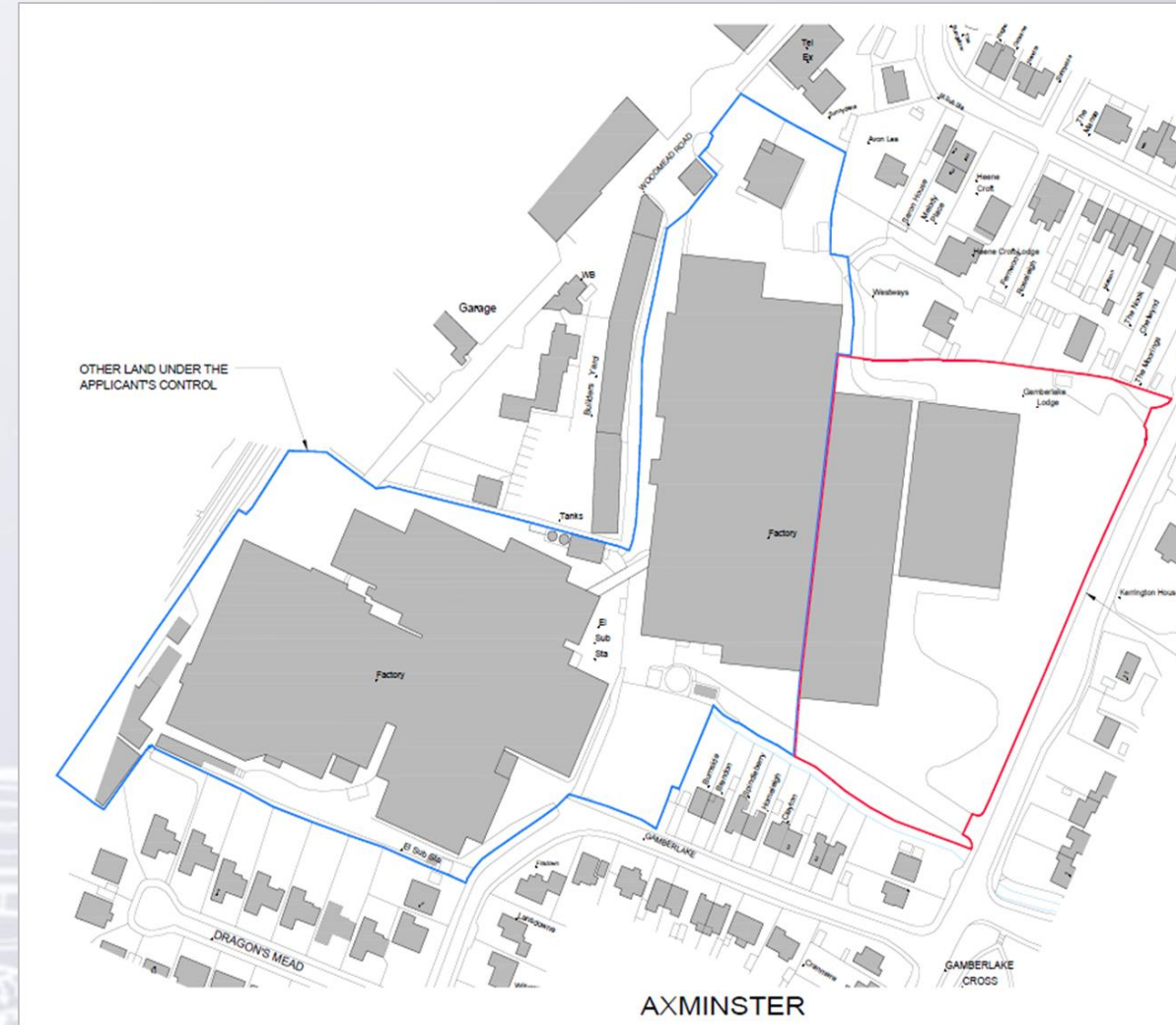


# Vision and objectives

- A **premier destination** within East Devon - harness known demand from high quality occupiers
- A **sustainable, high quality business environment** suitable for the 21st century
- A **vibrant mixed-use hub** for Axminster- provide business units, trade counter, retail, housing and other complementary uses
- **Contribute to Axminster's status**, growth and self-containment by providing opportunities for local businesses and the wider community
- Add **momentum to the Town Centre regeneration**
- Provide **enhanced pedestrian/cycle routes** to improve linkage with the Town Centre, railway station, and other local facilities
- Generate **over 450 local jobs in the long term** (estimated annual wage bill of £10.25m and private investment of circa £25m)

# Phase 1

- ACL and the consultant team have considered the consolidation and regeneration of the Estate whilst identifying how wider development opportunities could be realised to enable the modernisation and reorganisation of the Axminster Carpets production.
- The first phase of this plan considers the redevelopment of surplus Estate land fronting Musbury Road (shown in red).
- The buildings occupying this part of the site are no longer fit for purpose and ACL have concluded it is not viable to adapt the buildings to meet potential alternative employment occupiers.



# The Site

- The application site comprises 1.54 hectares (3.8 acres) of previously developed land located in the eastern part of the larger ACL Estate with access off Musbury Road.
- The site is well-located, adjacent to an existing residential area, with convenient bus stops, close to the railway station and only 550m walking distance from the Town Centre shopping area.
- Bordering the site to the north, south and east are residential properties. Immediately to the west are the existing factory units occupied by Axminster Carpets, Ulster Carpets, Bradfords and other trading SME's.
- The site slopes steeply to the north and east with a level area in the southernmost part.
- There are two large redundant portal-framed factory sheds on the application site, one which houses the loom and the other surplus to requirements, together with some small out-buildings.

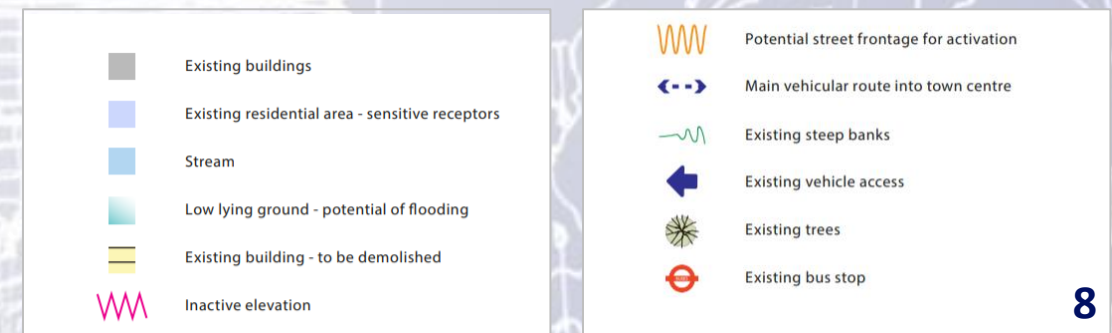
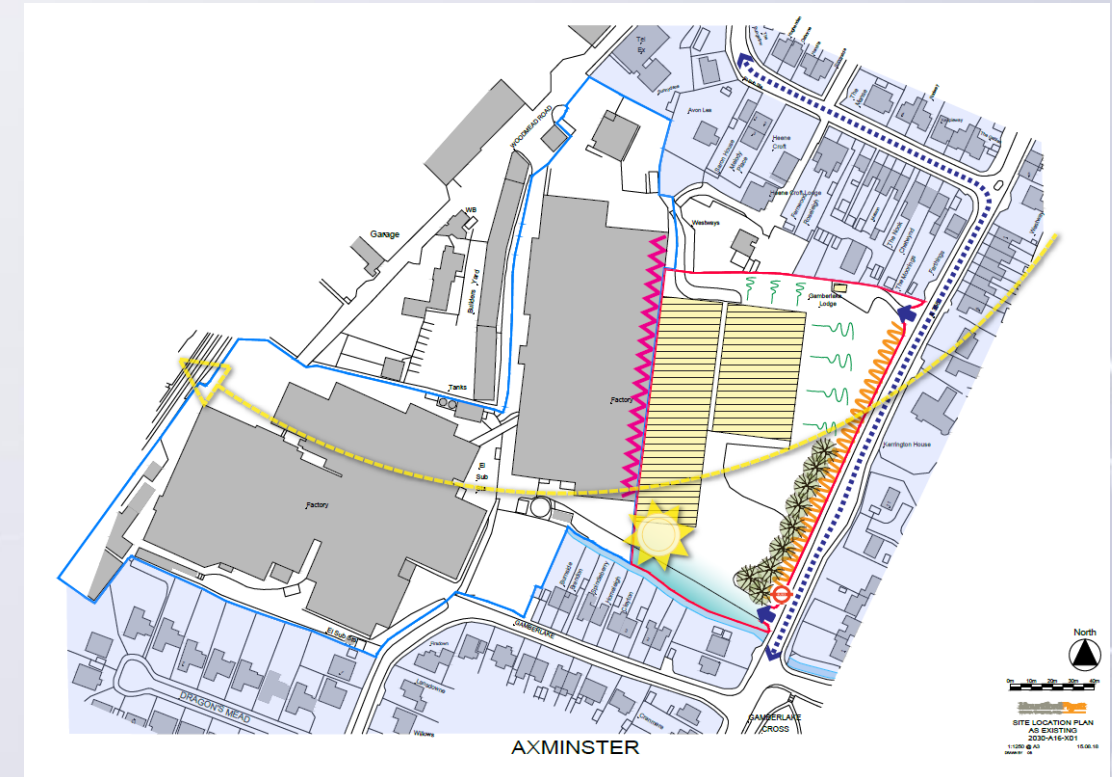


# Site analysis

A range of surveys and analysis of the site and the surrounding area have identified a number of key issues and opportunities.

The plan shows some of the key considerations which include:

- Existing factory buildings surplus to requirements
- Access points from Musbury Road and main vehicle route to the town centre
- Existing trees and a culverted stream at the southern site boundary with steep banks to the north and east
- Sloping site with southerly aspect
- Low lying ground to the south prone to potential flooding
- Potential for active street frontage along Musbury Road
- Scope to improve pedestrian/cycle link through the estate
- Opportunity for better connections to the wider area

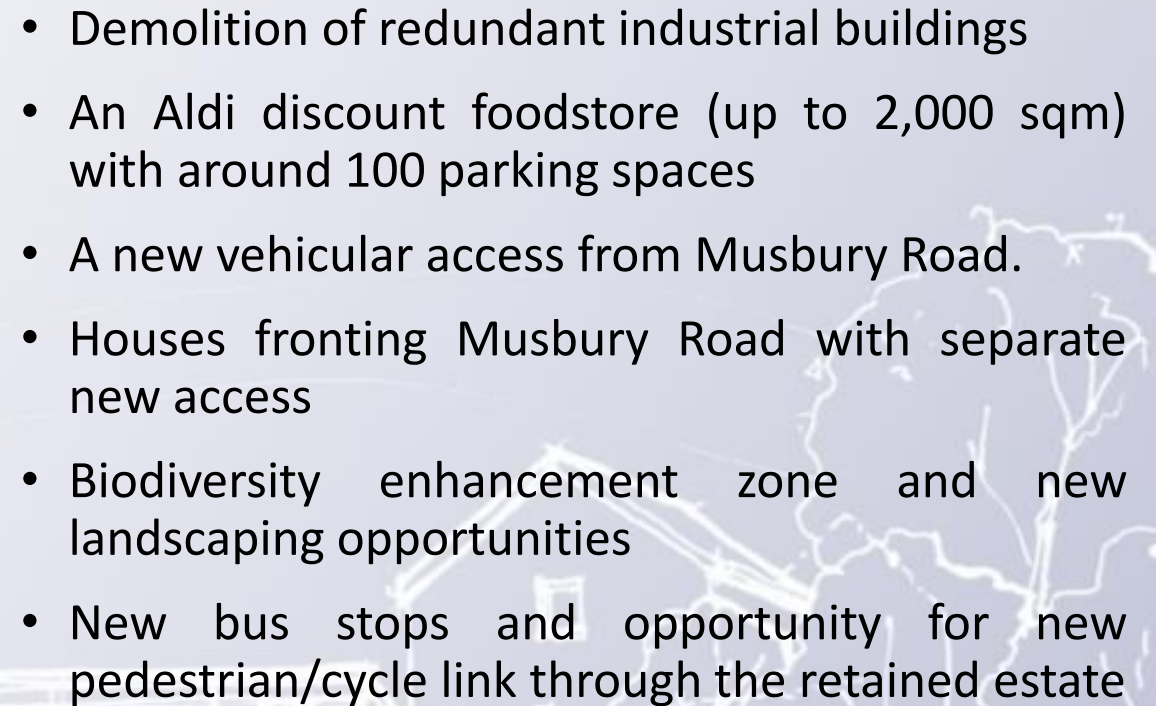


# Development Potential

- ACL has explored the potential of redeveloping the Musbury Road frontage land for a discount food store and housing.
- As part of this exercise Aldi has agreed heads of terms as the operator for the proposed food store.
- The benefits of introducing retail and residential use to the Estate are wide-ranging including:
  - The loom relocation funding
  - Contributing to the wider regeneration of the Estate
  - Creating new jobs
  - Improving consumer choice in Axminster
  - Supporting the town's growth



**Axminster  
Regeneration**



## About Aldi

- Aldi is one of the fastest growing businesses in the UK today.
- Aldi has more than 874 stores across the country and is expanding to meet strong customer demand.
- Multi-award winner and UK's favourite supermarket, according to Good Housekeeping.
- Aldi's rates of pay are significantly higher than the Government's National Living Wage and also above the Living Wage Foundation's recommended national rates.
- Store Assistants receive a minimum hourly rate of £9.40 nationally.
- Aldi stores are modest scale supermarkets, not a 'one-stop-shop', so customers also visit other shops and services.
- A limited range of predominantly own-brand products – around 1,800 lines compared to up to 40,000 lines in the larger stores.



## Benefits for the area

- Redevelopment of a brownfield site
- A high quality, sustainable building
- Improved foodstore offer and social inclusion in the area
- Up to 40 jobs for local people
- Reduced need to travel for award-winning Aldi offer



# Key Planning Policy Issues

## Location

- Site is inside the Built Up Area Boundary - development generally acceptable
- Strategy promotes development that will reinforce Axminster's self-containment and vitality

## Retail policy

- Sequential Test - consider suitability and availability of alternative preferable sites
- Impact – confirm no harmful impact on Axminster Town Centre

## Employment policy

- Allocated employment land but flexibility for alternative job-creating uses

## Housing policy

- Potential conflict with employment allocation

## Transportation

- Promote sustainable travel choices
- Ensure no significant impact on highway operation/safety

## Environment

- Flood risk, biodiversity and contamination considerations – address/mitigate/enhance

## Design/Sustainability

- Promote high quality, sustainable and energy-efficient design

# Key Benefits

- **Re-purposing underutilised brownfield land**
- **Sustainable location** within the Built Up Area
- **Enhanced retail offer** (Aldi foodstore) that will support a thriving and growing community
- **Reinforces Axminster's role** as a self-contained town
- **Net increase in jobs and job diversity**
- **Improved balance sheet** for the carpet-making business
- **Catalyst** for wider estate regeneration and economic growth
- A small but valuable **contribution to local housing needs**
- **Environmental and visual enhancements**
- **Embraces sustainable design/construction and energy efficiency**



# Next Steps

- We welcome your views on these emerging proposals
- Feedback from stakeholders and the community will be carefully considered by the design and planning team as they work up more detailed proposals prior to submitting a planning application to East Devon District Council later this year
- Subject to a planning approval, we anticipate starting on site in autumn of 2021 with the Aldi discount food store and houses being completed in late spring/early summer of 2022

<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>				<b>2021</b>		<b>2022</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>Sept/Oct</b>	<b>Oct/Nov</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Spring/Summer</b>
Preliminary discussions with EDDC officers and members	Submission of Pre Application enquiry	EDDC Members Advisory Panel	Community Consultation	Further scheme development	Submission of Planning Application	Planning determined	Expected start on site	Development completed