

PLANNING STATEMENT

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR A DAY CENTRE PROVIDING
SOCIAL CARE SERVICES
(USE CLASS E(F)) AND
HOUSING (USE CLASS C3) WITH
LANDSCAPING, CAR PARKING
AND ACCESS**

**2 HEXHAM ROAD,
READING, RG2 7UG**

**ON BEHALF OF
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

FEBRUARY 2023

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been produced by Shrimplin Planning & Development on behalf of Reading Borough Council in support of a full planning application for a day centre providing social care services (Use Class E(f)) and housing (Use Class C3) with landscaping, car parking and access (hereafter “Application Proposal”) at 2 Hexham Road, Reading, RG2 7UG (hereafter “Application Site”). The day centre is intended to serve adults with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD). The housing comprises 42 1-bed flats including 36 specialist units aimed at people typically over 55 (sheltered housing) and 6 units for general needs. It is intended that 100% of the units will be affordable at affordable rent. It will deliver a highly sustainable extremely low energy building which will be Passivhaus Certified.
- 1.2 The Application Proposal is the culmination of a detailed and wide ranging ‘Adult Social Care Asset Review and Capital Strategy’ undertaken by Reading Borough Council, which is summarised in Chapter 2. It has benefitted from extensive pre-app consultation with the local planning authority, engagement with relevant statutory consultees and has been presented to the Design Review Panel as well as being subject to engagement with local residents. The pre-app consultation is summarised in the Design and Access Statement.
- 1.3 The next chapter of this Planning Statement summarises the ‘Adult Social Care Asset Review and Capital Strategy’. Chapter 3 explains the Application Proposal and the information that forms the application submission. Chapter 4 describes the Application Site and its wider context. Chapter 5 summarises the relevant planning history of the Application Site. Chapter 6 sets out the relevant policy framework and the decision-making process. Chapter 7 provides an assessment of the Application Proposal against the development plan. A summary and conclusion are provided in Chapter 8.

2.0 ADULT SOCIAL CARE ASSET REVIEW AND CAPITAL STRATEGY

- 2.1 Reading Borough Council has undertaken a detailed and wide ranging ‘Adult Social Care Asset Review and Capital Strategy’. This was reported to the Policy Committee (18 January 2021). The Officer Report began by setting out the Council’s vision for Adult Social Care:

“Our vision for the Adult Social Care in-house provision is to deliver modernised, sustainable services that meet peoples’ personalised expectations and outcomes whilst delivering value for money. However, our current accommodation offer is not sufficient in terms of building structure, layout, size & adaptability, yet it supports some of our most vulnerable service users.” (paragraph 1.1).

- 2.2 As the Officer Report explains, the Adult Social Care Capital Strategy aligns with the Council’s broader strategy objectives:

“The Adult Social Care Capital Strategy aligns with the overall direction of the Council by meeting the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children
- Ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future” (paragraph 3.1).

- 2.3 It also explains that, whilst there is no statutory duty to provide services, the Local Authority does have a Statutory Duty under the Care Act 2014 to:

- “Ensure there is a range of high quality & appropriate services to choose from.
- Ensure that those Adults are able to receive services that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious.
- Meet an Adult’s need if they meet the eligibility criteria.” (paragraph 3.2)

2.4 Phase 1 of the Strategy was to undertake a review of the current suitability and condition of Adult Social Care's property assets alongside analysing projected needs in the medium to longer term and reviewing service delivery models (Section 4.1). This included consultation with service users, carers, families, staff, partner organisations and anyone with an interest in these services.

2.5 In terms of the provision of "Profound and Multiple Learning Disability Day Opportunities", this service is currently provided at Strathy Close. The service:

"...provides support to people with complex learning disability and physical disability needs who require a high ratio of care, many needing one staff member to support them all the time that they are at the service (1:1 care). Service users will have a personalised programme to support intended outcomes which could include support to develop life skills such as cooking and accessing the community; using the sensory room to provide them with a range of sensory experiences and support with maintaining their range of movement via muscle manipulation." (Section 4.6).

2.6 However, the building at Strathy Close is now dated and no longer fit for purpose:

"The current building needs some remodelling and refurbishment work to meet the needs of the current service users and develop it to support people who have challenging behaviours. However, this would only be short term fix and based on the projected need in the medium to long term, to ensure the service is able to accommodate this projected need a new facility would be required as the current site has limited room for expansion and can only accommodate minor increases in numbers." (Section 4.6).

2.7 In terms of "Housing Services Need" this is affordable housing as people will be allocated through the Council's housing register. It is a form of "sheltered housing" whereby occupants have support/contact but no services are provided on site (i.e. it is not extra care or care). Residents will be older people, typically over 55 years of age.

Their needs vary: some are fully independent; some need care so carers may come in; some may have family members coming to visit; some are couples, some single; some drive, some use public transport, some use mobility scooters. They are contacted each week for the first 6 weeks to help them settle into their new home, then after that it is adjusted based on the needs of the individual which may then include a daily, weekly or monthly contact.

2.8 This form of accommodation that allows people to downsize is particularly important as it encourages people to vacate underoccupied, large family homes. By releasing larger houses it helps with the fluidity of the affordable housing stock.

2.9 However, the Officer Report explained how existing provision was not fit for purpose:

“There are three blocks of sheltered housing flats which do not meet the needs of all older people. Two of the blocks are far from local services and amenities and all three do not have the facility to install lifts and as such are unsuitable for those who are frail, have mobility issues or who are disabled. The service ambition is to re-provide new homes for older people within modern facilities that meet the needs of existing tenants and new tenants including those who wish to downsize from family sized homes. The re-provision of homes would enable the service to eventually phase out the use of three current blocks releasing further site opportunities to develop new housing. It would also enable older people currently under occupying larger family home to relocate into more suitable accommodation.” (Section 4.9).

2.10 Phase 2 involved feasibility studies to look at development opportunities, undertaken by Hampshire County Council. This included considering the possibility to co-locate services. This recommended:

“...the consolidation of services over two sites which allows the needs of Adult Social Care service users to be met and enables housing opportunities to be maximised.

“In addition, this approach releases sites to provide further opportunities for development or to generate capital receipts to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy.” (Section 5.1).

- 2.11 The Officer Report recommended the development of two sites, Battle Street (currently subject to a live planning application) and Hexham Road (the subject of this planning application). It explained that the objective was:

“...to provide a consolidation of Adult Social Care services which allows the needs of Adult Social Care service users to be met and enables housing opportunities to be maximised.” (paragraph 1.2)

- 2.12 The Officer Report explains the benefit of delivering both Adult Social Care and specialist housing together:

“Developing new homes for older people alongside the provision of older persons day services provides an opportunity to provide a dynamic and exciting new model of delivery with a level of cross fertilisation of services that improves the wellbeing of customers of both services.” (Section 4.9)

- 2.13 This recommendation resulted in the current planning application for a day centre providing social care services (Use Class E(f)) and housing (Use Class C3). The housing comprises 42 1-bed flats including 36 specialist units aimed at people typically over 55 (sheltered housing) and 6 units for general needs. It is intended that 100% of the units will be affordable at affordable rent¹.

¹ The scheme Road was originally intended to include nine respite care units. The respite service provides regulated activity which necessitates a requirement to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Initial engagement took place with CQC in summer 2021 and as the conversations developed in line with the design development, CQC raised some concerns about the size, setting and layout of the building. They felt that it deviated from guidance for Services for Autistic People and People with a Learning Disability (Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture), as the proposal also included a day service and sheltered accommodation on the same site. They described this as having a ‘campus feel’ which in their view was not aligned to best practice in the guidance.

CQC have advised that they are only able to grant registration once an application has been made and the building is completed. Considering the feedback from CQC and being unable to mitigate against some of the issues raised by CQC, it was deemed too much of a risk to proceed with the build

- 2.14 The next chapter explains the Application Proposal and the information that forms the application submission

of respite provision on Hexham Road when CQC could then take the decision to not register the service for use.

3.0 APPLICATION PROPOSAL AND THE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

- 3.1 This chapter explains the Application Proposal and the information that forms the application submission.

The Application Proposal

- 3.2 The Application Proposal is for a day centre providing social care services (Use Class E(f)) and housing (Use Class C3) with landscaping, car parking and access.
- 3.3 The building has been carefully located on the site to respond to on site constraints, in particular trees, as well as its surroundings. It will range in height from one storey to four storeys. It is one storey facing Bede Walk to the south and two storeys facing residential properties to the east, rising to three storeys facing Hexham Road and four storeys alongside Northumberland Avenue.
- 3.4 The site access is from Hexham Road, as currently, but a second access has been created to avoid the need for vehicles to turn within the site and thus make access safer and easier. There are also pedestrian accesses onto Bede Walk.
- 3.5 The day centre is intended to serve adults with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD). It is located on the ground floor and contains a number of different rooms as well as administration space. It has access to dedicated outside space to the rear.
- 3.6 The housing comprises 42 1-bed flats including 36 specialist units aimed at people typically over 55 (sheltered housing)² and 6 units for general needs. It is intended that

² NPPG 'Housing for Older and disabled people explains that "There are different types of specialist housing designed to meet the diverse needs of older people, which can include:... Retirement living or sheltered housing: This usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager." (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 63-010-20190626).

Local Plan Policy Policy H6: Accommodation For Vulnerable People refers to "Other specialist accommodation for vulnerable people will address the identified needs, which are primarily for

100% of the units will be affordable at affordable rent. These are located at ground floor and upper floors. The units have access to dedicated outside space to the rear and western side of the building and also contains shared internal and external spaces at first, second and third floors.

- 3.7 The Application Proposal will deliver a highly sustainable extremely low energy building which will be Passivhaus Certified.
- 3.8 The Application Proposal includes 16 car parking spaces (including 3 accessible spaces), 28 bicycle parking spaces, 1 motorcycle parking space and 10 mobility scooter parking spaces. 3 car parking spaces are re-provided within the existing verge along Hexham Road. Electric Vehicle charging is provided for 11 spaces on site and 3 along Hexham Road.

The application submission

- 3.9 The application submission includes a full range of supporting information which demonstrate that the Application Proposal is acceptable. This includes:
- Access Strategy (Hampshire County Council Property Services) (20 January 2023);
 - Archaeological Heritage Statement ETE Archaeological Service (Hampshire County Council) (September 2021);
 - Archaeological Evaluation (Thames Valley Archaeological Service) (January 2023);
 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Form 1: CIL Additional Information (Shrimplin Planning & Development) (2 February 2023);
 - Covering letter (Shrimplin Planning & Development) (3 February 2023);
 - Consultation Comments Tracker (Hampshire County Council);

accommodation that enables occupants to live as independently as possible, particularly for older people and people with physical disabilities.”

- Daylight/Sunlight Report – Internal (Daylight Sunlight Consulting Ltd) (30 January 2023);
- Daylight/Sunlight Report – Neighbours (Daylight Sunlight Consulting Ltd) (20 January 2023);
- Design and Access Statement (Hampshire County Council Property Services) (February 2023);
- Drawings (Hampshire County Council Property Services):
 - Location Plan, drawing E05076-HCC-PS-01-DR-A-1000 (February 2023);
 - Existing Site Plan, drawing E05076-HCC-PS-01-DR-A-1500 (January 2023);
 - Proposed Site Plan, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-RL-DR-A-1501 (February 2023);
 - GA Ground Floor Plan, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-GF-DR-A-2050 (February 2023);
 - GA First Floor Plan, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-01-DR-A-2051 (February 2023)
 - GA Second Floor Plan, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-02-DR-A-2052 (February 2023);
 - GA Third Floor Plan, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-03-DR-A-2053 (February 2023);
 - GA Roof Plan, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-RL-DR-A-2054 (February 2023);
 - GA Elevations - Sheet 1, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-XX-DR-A-3000 (February 2000);
 - GA Elevations - Sheet 2, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-XX-DR-A-3001 (February 2023);
 - Bay Elevations, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-XX-DR-A-3050 (February 2023);
 - GA Sections - Sheet 01, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-XX-DR-A-3100 (February 2023);
 - GA Sections Sheet 02, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-XX-DR-A-3101 (February 2023);
 - External Building Materials, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1840 revision P1 (February 2023);

- Brick Bond Types, Distribution and Precedents, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1850 revision P1 (February 2023);
- Models 1:1500 Massing model, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-MR-A-1860-P1 (February 2023);
- Models 1_500 Terracotta massing model, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-MR-A-1870 revision P1 (February 2023);
- Models 1_250 Timber massing model, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-MR-A-1880 revision P1 (February 2023);
- Proposed Flat Layout Design-Axonometric and Model, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-MR-A-1890 revision P1 (February 2023);
- Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5900 (February 2023);
- Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5901 (February 2023);
- Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5902 (February 2023);
- Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5903 (February 2023);
- Schedule of Dwelling Room Sizes, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-SC-A-5904 (February 2023);
- Aerial View, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-VS-A-1800 revision P1 (February 2023);
- Proposed Visuals 1, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-VS-A-1810 revision P1 (February 2023);
- Proposed Visuals 2, drawing E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-VS-A-1820 revision P1 (February 2023);
- Proposed Visuals 3, E05076-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-VS-A-1830 revision P1 (February 2023).
- Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Hampshire County Council Ecology Team) (February 2023);

- Energy Efficiency Statement (Hampshire County Council Property Services) (23 February 2023);
- External Lighting Strategy (Hampshire County Council Property Services) (February 2023);
- Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy Report revision P01 (Hampshire Engineering Services) (14 February 2023), including Proposed Drainage Design, drawing E05076-ECH-XX-XX-DR-C-7501 revision P02 (13 February 2023) and Proposed Drainage Design, drawing E05076-ECH-XX-XX-DR-C-7502 revision P02 (13 February 2023);
- Landscape drawings (Hampshire County Council Property Services):
 - Landscape General Arrangement Plan, drawing E05076-L-7001 revision P02 (17 February 2023);
 - Hard Surfaces and Levels Plan, drawing E05076-L-7101 revision P01 (9 February 2023);
 - Means of Enclosure and Furniture Plan, drawing E05076-L-7201 revision P01 (9 February 2023);
 - Tree Planting Plan, drawing E05076-L-7301 revision P02 (15 February 2023);
 - Detail Planting Plan and Topsoil Depths, drawing E05076-L-7302 revision P02 (17 February 2023);
 - Planting Specification and Aftercare Plan, drawing E05076-L-7303 revision P03 (15 February 2023).
- Mechanical and Electrical External Underground Services, drawing E05076-HCC-00-00-DR-M&E-8100 revision P02 (Hampshire County Council Property Services);
- Noise Impact Assessment revision 2 (24 Acoustics) (9 February 2023);
- Phase 1 Contaminated Land Desk Study Report revision 02 (terrafirma) (February 2023);
- Phase 2 Ground Investigation Report revision 01 (terrafirma) (August 2021);
- Planning Statement (Shrimplin Planning & Development) (February 2023);

- Stage D Utilities Statement for Planning (Hampshire County Council Property Services) (February 2023), including Mechanical and Electrical External Underground Services, drawing - E05076-HCC-00-00-DR-ME-8100 revision P2;
- Superfast Broadband Strategy Statement Issue 1 (Hampshire County Council Property Services) (February 2023);
- Sustainability Statement Version 2 (MACE) (23 February 2023);
- Swept Path Analysis Readibus, drawing E05076-ECH-XX-XX-DR-C-7100 revision P02 (Transport Planning Services, Strategic Transport, Hampshire County Council) (13 February 2023);
- The Biodiversity Metric 3.1 - Calculation Tool (Hampshire County Council Ecology Team) (1 February 2023);
- Transport Statement Issue 02 (Transport Planning Services, Strategic Transport, Hampshire County Council) (9 February 2023);
- Trees (Hampshire Highways Arboriculture):
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment (8 February 2023);
 - Tree Survey Data (Hampshire Highways Arboriculture);
 - Drawing RBC HexRd DTCP SK 1.0 issue 1.1 (5 August 2021);
 - Tree Protection Plan (15 February 2022);
 - Arboricultural Method Statement (2 February 2023).
- Vent/Flue and Ventilation Details Statement Issue: 1 (24 February 2023).

3.10 The supporting reports demonstrate that the Application Proposal is acceptable in all respects.

4.0 APPLICATION SITE AND ITS WIDER CONTEXT

4.1 This chapter describes the Application Site and its wider context.

Application Site

4.2 The Application Site was previously occupied by a residential care home known as The Willows was built in the late 1970s and comprised a 16 bed residential care home for people with dementia and 10 small flats to provide intermediate care/rehabilitation following an injury or illness (Discharge to Assess (D2A)). In September 2018 Reading Borough Council's Adult Social Care undertook a consultation about the future of The Willows. The consultation proposed closing the residential care home and moving the intermediate care/rehabilitation beds to Charles Clore Court (an Extra Care provision) on the basis that this would deliver better outcomes for users as the alternative options would be better suited to meeting their needs. A report by the Director of Adult Care and Health Services on the "Response to The Willows/discharge to assess consultation and future proposal" was presented to the Policy Committee (14 January 2019) summarised the consultation process and recommendation³. As a result The Willows closed in 2020 and was demolished in November 2022.

³ "What is the aim of your policy or new service/ what changes are you proposing? The Council delivers a 14-bed based Discharge to Assess (D2A) which is provided through a partnership between Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT). It is delivered from the Council's 27 bed residential service "The Willows". The proposed changes for the Discharge to Assess service aim to re-provide the current provision in an alternative premise whilst expanding the ability to provide an increased service at home. This change has prompted a consideration of the continued use of the Willows residential home and respite provision. It is proposed that due to low usage and the availability of alternative provision in the community the Willows Residential Home is closed in its current format.

"Who will benefit from this proposal and how? Residential service users will benefit by living in buildings that are more suitable for their need (i.e. buildings that meet Kings Fund guidance for people with dementia).

"What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom? The service aims to deliver better outcomes for residential and respite service users. Replacement environments will be better suited to meeting their needs; for instance, other residential services would present environments that allow space for wheelchair users, present fewer trip hazards and allow better accessibility for bariatric service users." ("Response to The Willows/discharge to assess consultation and future proposal", Policy Committee (14 January 2019), Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment – Willow).

- 4.3 The Application Site is currently overgrown scrubland with the hardstanding remaining from the footprint of the building and the associated car parking areas. It contains a number of trees and shrubs.

Wider context

- 4.4 The Application Site is to the south of the City Centre. It is located in a sustainable location with a choice of means of transport and within 400m of the District Centre of Whitley and the Local Centres of Basingstoke Road North and Northumberland Avenue North.
- 4.5 The Application Site is enclosed by residential properties to the north, east and west and Reading Girls School to the south. The residential properties are predominantly 2 storey terrace houses although there are also a number of 4 storey maisonettes and apartment blocks at the Eastern end of Hexham Road. Reading Girls Schools has a distinctive 2/3 storey training block adjacent to the Application Site with the main building of 3 storeys further south.
- 4.6 The Application is bounded by Hexham Road to the north, adjacent residential dwellings to the east, Bede Walk (a pedestrian footpath) to the south and Northumberland Avenue to the west. Northumberland Avenue is a key route into Reading.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 This chapter summarises the planning history of the Application Site
- 4.2 As explained above, the Application Site was previously occupied by The Willows. This gained Prior Approval for demolition on 13 October 2022 (reference 221019) and was demolished in November 2022.
- 4.3 There are a number of earlier planning permissions and temporary planning permissions relating to the earlier use as The Willows which are not directly relevant to the Application Proposal.

6.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS

6.1 The chapter sets out the development plan and the decision making process.

Development plan

6.2 The relevant parts of the development plan comprise the Reading Local Plan 2013-2036 (November 2019).

6.3 Relevant supplementary planning documents are material planning considerations, including the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (December 2019), although it pre-dates the NPPF and adopted Local Plan which limits the weight that can be given to it. The NPPF (July 2021), with additional guidance in the NPPG, is also an important material planning consideration.

Decision-making process

6.4 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be “determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise” (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

6.5 The NPPF explains that “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development” (paragraph 11). For “decision taking” this means:

- “approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; or
- where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole”.

6.6 In this case the policies which are most important for determining the application are up to date. As a result, the Application Proposal needs to be assessed on the basis of whether it is in accordance with the development plan.

6.7 The recently adopted Local Plan reflects the above approach in Policy CC1: presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.8 In considering applications it is important to bear in mind the advice in the NPPF’s chapter on “decision making”, reflected in Policy CC1, which begins by encouraging local planning authorities to approve applications:

“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available... and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.” (paragraph 38).

6.9 The next chapter assesses the Application Proposal within this policy framework and decision making process.

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL

- 7.1 This chapter assesses the Application Proposal against the development plan in terms of the principle of development, that it provides an important community facility; delivers housing in a sustainable location; delivers affordable housing; delivers specialist housing; makes efficient use of scarce urban land; is of high quality design and amenity space provision; and is highly energy efficient.

Principle of development

- 7.2 NPPF explains in Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development that to achieve this the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These include:

“b) a **social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being;” (emphasis added).

- 7.3 The Local Plan’s “Vision” is “...the starting point for the Local Plan, in that it sets out how we see Reading in 2036, at the end of the plan period.” (paragraph 2.1.1). It covers a wide range of issues, including the need to deliver housing and services:

“Reading’s residents, particularly those most in need, will have access to high quality housing that meets their requirements and safeguards their quality of life. All residents will have access to adequate services and facilities... Residents will have all that they need to be able to live a full and active life.” (emphasis added).

- 7.4 The Vision provides the basis for a number of “Objectives” which contain more of a planning emphasis. These include:

“2. Make the most efficient use of Reading’s limited land, particularly previously developed land, to ensure that as many new homes as possible are delivered to meet identified needs, particularly needs for affordable housing;

“3. Improve the quality of life for those living, working, studying in and visiting the Borough, creating inclusive, sustainable communities with good access to employment, open space and waterspace, transport, education, services and facilities (such as sustainable water supplies and wastewater treatment, healthcare services, social and community facilities, sport and recreation, etc.) to meet identified needs;

“9. Ensure that Reading is a healthy, clean, safe and socially-inclusive community where the needs of all its citizens are met by high quality, cost effective services and outstanding levels of community involvement”

- 7.5 The Application Proposal will provide a day centre providing social care services and housing, both of which are vitally important.

- 7.6 The principle of development is therefore in accordance with The Local Plan’s “Vision” and “Objectives” 2, 3, 9 as well as the NPPF’s “social objective” element of sustainable development as set out in Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development.

Provides an important community facility

- 7.7 Policy OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities which is a permissive policy that positively supports the provision of new community facilities, stating that:

“Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site.” (emphasis added).

7.8 The Policy goes on to say that:

“New community facilities should be located where there is a choice of means of travel (including walking and cycling), and in existing centres where possible”.

7.9 The supporting text emphasises the importance of providing this type of facility to the whole of the population:

“Quality of life for the residents of Reading is one of the key elements of the vision for the Borough. A good quality of life is not only desirable in itself, but also ensures that Reading remains attractive to investment. The provision of sufficient good quality community facilities is crucial to ensuring that Reading is a place in which people want to live and continue living.” (paragraph 4.7.1).

“The range and quality of facilities serving Reading’s communities should be improved.” (paragraph 4.7.3)

7.10 The Application Site is located in a sustainable location with a choice of means of transport and within 400 metres of the District Centre of Whitley and the Local Centres of Basingstoke Road North and Northumberland Avenue North. It also includes secure storage for mobility scooters.

7.11 The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities.

Delivers housing in a sustainable urban location

7.12 NPPF Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes sets out “... the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes...”.

7.13 Policy H1: Provision of Housing sets out the Council’s housing target, noting that it is a minimum target:

“Provision will be made for at least an additional 15,847 homes (averaging 689 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036.”
(emphasis added).

- 7.14 The supporting text emphasises that there is a “pressing” need for housing but that delivering it will be challenging and will rely on brownfield sites:

“There is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area” (paragraph 4.4.1).

“However, Reading is a very tightly defined urban area, and sites for new development are limited. The undeveloped land that does exist is mainly either in the functional floodplain or is important public open space. Provision of new housing therefore involves a heavy reliance on previously developed land, and the supply of such sites constrains the amount of housing that can be delivered in the Borough” (paragraph 4.4.3).

- 7.15 The Council’s Annual Monitoring Report 2021-22 (December 2022) explains that although the housing target of 689 dwellings/year was not met in 2019-20 (521 dwellings) nor 2020-21 (408 dwellings), it was achieved in 2021/22 (850 dwellings) (Table 8.1). Including all forms of housing the Council can demonstrate a 6.3 year housing land supply (Table 8.3). The Application Proposal can contribute to this ongoing success.

- 7.16 The Application Site can make an important contribution towards meeting Reading’s pressing housing needs. It is therefore in accordance with Policy H1: Provision of Housing.

Delivers affordable housing

7.17 As explained above, NPPF Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing and this includes affordable homes.

7.18 Policy H3: Affordable Housing seeks to deliver affordable housing. The supporting text explains the critical need for affordable housing and the important role it plays:

“The Berkshire (with South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2016) has once again emphasised the critical need for affordable housing within Reading as well as the remainder of Berkshire. The SHMA identified a need for 406 new affordable homes per year in Reading, which represents the majority of the overall housing required. The consequences of not providing much-needed affordable homes would be severe, and would include homelessness, households in temporary or unsuitable accommodation, overcrowding and younger people having to remain living with parents for increasing periods. Insufficient affordable housing will also act as an impediment to economic growth, as firms will face increasing problems with accommodation for their workforce. Meeting even a substantial proportion of the identified housing need presents significant challenges...” (paragraph 4.4.19).

7.19 The Council’s Annual Monitoring Report 2021-22 (December 2022) explains that, due to progress with particular large developments where a substantial proportion of their affordable delivery has come in this year, the housing amount of affordable housing in that year was 178 dwelling was significantly higher than 2019-20 (80 dwellings) and 2020-21 (54 dwellings) and is the highest level delivered since 2013 (Table 8.1 and paragraph 8.13). It also explains it is expected that affordable housing delivery will continue to be “relatively strong” in coming years (paragraph 8.13). Nevertheless, the Report accepts that this is “well below” the annual affordable housing need of 406/year (paragraph 8.13).

- 7.20 The applicant will commit to 30% of the units being affordable, which is policy compliant, but with the intention that 100% of the units will be affordable. The affordable rent tenure is supported by the Council's Strategic Housing Manager.
- 7.21 The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy H3: Affordable Housing as well as the Council's Affordable Housing SPD (July 2013) and NPPF Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes.

Delivers specialist housing

- 7.22 As explained in Chapter 3, the Application Proposal includes 36 specialist housing units. Policy H6: Accommodation For Vulnerable People seeks to provide care bedspaces as well as other specialist accommodation:
- i) "Provision will be made for at least an additional 253 residential care bedspaces for elderly people between 2013 and 2036, in addition to the overall housing need. Other specialist accommodation for vulnerable people will address the identified needs, which are primarily for accommodation that enables occupants to live as independently as possible, particularly for older people and people with physical disabilities.
 - ii) Development for specialist accommodation for vulnerable people will fulfil the following criteria:
 - Developments will, where possible, locate accommodation close to, or incorporate, relevant community facilities, such as healthcare services, or day care for elderly people;
 - Where development would result in a loss of general housing, it must meet identified needs in the most up-to-date Housing Strategy and be able to accommodate at least an equivalent number of people;
 - Larger developments will include adequate provision for ambulance access;

- Development will incorporate areas of green space, which are particularly important for many groups of vulnerable people;
- Developments within residential areas will be designed to respect the residential character of their surroundings; and
- Where a development requires a new physical link between buildings and where the gaps between buildings form part of the character of a street, the need for a linkage must be clearly demonstrated, and must avoid negative impacts on the character of the street.

iii) Development catering for people with limited mobility will fulfil the following criteria:

- Developments should be located within 400 metres of an identified district or local centre and a bus stop on a strategic bus route; and
- Development should include secure storage for mobility scooters.

iv) Affordable specialist housing for vulnerable people that meets the needs of the most up to date Housing Strategy may count towards affordable housing provision in line with policy H3.”

7.23 In terms of criterion i), the Application Proposal is not for residential care bedspaces for elderly people. However, it does provide specialist accommodation that is targeted at older people (typically over 55) that will enable the occupants to live as independently as possible.

7.24 In terms of criterion ii), all of the criterion are met including that the Application Site is close to numerous community and other services (as well as providing support on site); it will not result in the loss of general needs housing; it includes provision for ambulance access; it includes green space; it respects the residential character of its surroundings; and does not link existing buildings.

7.25 In terms of criterion iii), not all residents will have limited mobility but the Application Site is nevertheless within 400 metres of the District Centre of Whitley and the Local

Centres of Basingstoke Road North and Northumberland Avenue North. It also includes secure storage for mobility scooters.

- 7.26 In terms of criterion iv), the Application Proposal is affordable housing as people will be allocated through the Council's housing register.
- 7.27 The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy H6: Accommodation For Vulnerable People.

Makes effective use of scarce urban land

- 7.28 The NPPF has a specific Chapter 11: Making effective use of land. This begins by making clear that:

“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions” (paragraph 119).

- 7.29 It highlights the need to make best use of underutilised land and buildings:

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs,...

“d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively...” (paragraph 120).

- 7.30 The NPPF also encourages local planning authorities to proactively identify sites, which is exactly what Reading Borough Council have done:

“Local planning authorities, and other plan-making bodies, should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield

registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them.” (paragraph 121).

7.31 As explained above, the Local Plan has a number of “Objectives” which include:

“2. Make the most efficient use of Reading’s limited land, particularly previously developed land, to ensure that as many new homes as possible are delivered to meet identified needs, particularly needs for affordable housing;”

7.32 It is also reflected in the “Spatial Strategy for Reading” which highlights the constrained nature of Reading and the need to ensure the efficient use of land:

“The constrained nature of Reading Borough dictates the spatial strategy to some extent. Significant development can only occur where sites are available, which inevitably means a considerable focus on the centre and south of Reading. Opportunities for large-scale expansion of the town onto greenfield sites within the Borough are virtually non-existent, with the small rural areas within the boundaries subject to significant flood risk. This means a need to look within the existing urban area for opportunities, and to ensure efficient use of land.” (paragraph 3.2.1).

7.33 Policy H2: density and mix explains the importance of making the best use of land and the factors that will inform the density of development:

“The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by:

- the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas;
- its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
- the need to achieve high quality design;
- the need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and

- “the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.”

- 7.34 The supporting text gives advice on density ranges, which is not applicable here as the Application Proposal contains a mix of uses. It also gives advice on the size of units, which is not applicable here as the Application Proposal is principally for specialist housing.
- 7.35 Both the NPPF and the Local Plan emphasise the need to make efficient use of scarce brownfield land. The Local Plan highlights the constrained nature of Reading and the need to ensure the efficient use of land.
- 7.36 The Application Proposal makes effective use of scarce urban land in accordance with the Local Plan’s “Objectives”, “Spatial Strategy for Reading” and Policy H2: density and mix as well as NPPF Chapter 11: Making effective use of land.

High quality design and amenity space provision

- 7.37 NPPF Chapter 12 on “Achieving well-designed places” begins by stating that:
- “The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.” (paragraph 124).
- 7.38 Local Plan Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm sets out a wide range of considerations that need to be borne in mind when designing schemes:
- “All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including:

- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
- Landscape;
- Density and mix;
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives: -

- Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place
- Continuity and enclosure
- Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping
- Ease of movement and permeability
- Legibility - clear image and easy to understand
- Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time
- Diversity – meets a wide range of needs.

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: -

- Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;
- Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;
- Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;

- Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.

Applications for major developments, or other relevant developments, should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deals with all the above matters.”

7.39 Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity sets out a number of important considerations about the living environment of existing and proposed residential properties:

“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety; or
- Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.”

7.40 The supporting text explains that:

“One of the key concerns of planning is to ensure that new development does not reduce the quality of the environment for others, particularly where it

would affect residential properties. At the same time, ensuring that new development creates a quality living environment for future residents is also critical.” (paragraph 4.1.36)

“Most tensions can be avoided by careful design, siting and orientation of buildings and spaces, paying particular attention to those aspects which are most likely to cause issues (e.g. car parks, bin stores and noisy equipment), and which are most sensitive to effects (e.g. children’s play areas, outdoor spaces or habitable rooms). Planning conditions can also be used to deal with matters such as the installation of extraction systems, hours of operation, or preventing a development from changing its character.” (paragraph 4.1.38).

- 7.41 All of these considerations set out in Policy CC7: Design and Policy CC8: Public Realm Safeguarding Amenity have been borne in mind in designing the scheme. Further detail can be found in the Design and Access Statement and the supporting information.

Highly energy efficient

- 7.42 NPPF Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change begins by making clear that:

“The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate,...” (paragraph 152).

- 7.43 Local Plan Policy H5: Standards for New Housing includes various standards, but with regard to energy efficiency states that:

“New build housing should be built to the following standards, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable:...

b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations⁷⁹.

c. All major new-build residential development should be designed to achieve zero carbon homes...”

7.44 The Application Proposal will employ PV panels to allow it to achieve a 100% reduction in CO2 emissions with aim to achieve net zero carbon building.

7.45 Local Plan Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction is positively worded, saying that developments which meet the standards will be supported:

“Proposals for new development... will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.”

7.46 The Policy explains that minor non-residential developments must achieve BREEAM ‘Very Good’ as a minimum as well as incorporating water conservation measures whilst both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy and cost effective.

7.47 The Application Proposal will deliver a highly sustainable extremely low energy building which will be Passivhaus Certified. These exceed the the required BREEAM standard

7.48 The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy H5: Standards for New Housing and Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction as well as Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This Planning Statement has been produced by Shrimplin Planning & Development on behalf of Reading Borough Council in support of a full planning application for a day centre providing social care services (Use Class E(f)) and housing (Use Class C3) with landscaping, car parking and access at 2 Hexham Road, Reading. The day centre is intended to serve adults with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD). The housing comprises 42 1-bed flats including 36 specialist units aimed at people typically over 55 (sheltered housing) and 6 units for general needs. It is intended that 100% of the units will be affordable at affordable rent. The Application Proposal will deliver a highly sustainable extremely low energy building which will be Passivhaus Certified.
- 8.2 The Application Proposal is the culmination of a detailed and wide ranging 'Adult Social Care Asset Review and Capital Strategy', which is summarised in Chapter 2. It has benefitted from extensive pre-app consultation with the local planning authority, engagement with relevant statutory consultees and has been presented to the Design Review Panel as well as being subject to engagement with local residents. This is all summarised in the Design and Access Statement.
- 8.3 Chapter 3 explained the Application Proposal and the information that forms the application submission.
- 8.4 Chapter 4 described the Application Site and its wider context. This explained that the Application Site was previously occupied by a residential care home known as The Willows built in the late 1970s. It was closed and the intermediate care/rehabilitation beds moved to Charles Clore Court (an Extra Care provision) on the basis that this would deliver better outcomes for users as the alternative options would be better suited to meeting their needs. It closed in 2020 and was demolished in November 2022.

- 8.5 Chapter 5 summarised the relevant planning history, highlighting that The Willows gained Prior Approval for demolition on 13 October 2022 (reference 221019) and was demolished in November 2022.
- 8.6 Chapter 6 set out the relevant policy framework and the decision-making process, concluding that the Application Proposal needs to be considered in terms of its conformity with the development plan. Chapter 7 provided an assessment of Application Proposal against the development plan. It demonstrates that the principle of development is in accordance with The Local Plan's "Vision" and "Objectives" 2, 3, 9 as well as the NPPF's "social objective" element of sustainable development as set out in Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development.
- 8.7 The Application Proposal provides an important community facility in accordance with Local Plan Policy OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities.
- 8.8 It delivers housing in a sustainable location, in accordance with Policy H1: Provision of Housing as well as and NPPF Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes.
- 8.9 The applicant will commit to 30% of the units being affordable, which is policy compliant, but with the intention that 100% of the units will be affordable. The affordable rent tenure is supported by the Council's Strategic Housing Manager. It is therefore in accordance with Policy H3: Affordable Housing as well as the Council's Affordable Housing SPD (July 2013) and NPPF Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes.
- 8.10 The Application Proposal delivers specialist housing in accordance with Policy H6: Accommodation For Vulnerable People.
- 8.11 It makes effective use of scarce urban land in accordance with the Local Plan's "Objectives", "Spatial Strategy for Reading" and Policy H2: density and mix as well as NPPF Chapter 11: Making effective use of land.

- 8.12 It is of high quality design and amenity space provision, in accordance with Policy CC7: Design and Policy CC8: Public Realm Safeguarding Amenity have been borne in mind in designing the scheme.
- 8.13 The Application Proposal is highly energy efficient in accordance with Policy H5: Standards for New Housing and Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction as well as Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.
- 8.14 We respectfully request that planning permission is granted.