

C3 Restricted Age Note

Land at 205-213 Henley Rd & land to the rear of 205-219 Henley Rd, Reading

Application ref: 220189

November 2022

Context

- 1.1 During a meeting held in July 2022, Reading Borough Council raised concerns with the proposed age-restriction of 55 years and over.
- 1.2 In response to comments, additional work has been conducted to reassess the age-restriction and to establish whether there was additional evidence to support a scheme with an age-restriction of 55 years and over. It was concluded that the evidence justifies an age restriction of 65 years and over, more appropriately than 55 years and over.
- 1.3 As a result, this note outlines the evidence and justification for now providing an age-restricted scheme for 65 years and over.

Delivery of accommodation for vulnerable people

- 1.4 The Planning Statement submitted with this application set out that the proposal was to provide 59 units of accommodation which were to be limited for residents aged 55 years and over.
- 1.5 The principle of proposing C3 age restricted accommodation remains as originally proposed, and the justification for such accommodation is set out as follows, as was previously stated.
- 1.6 The proposed development seeks to bring forward 59 age –restricted residential apartments in the form of sheltered accommodation for older persons. The design of the scheme has evolved with careful consideration to the needs of the future residents with the inclusion of communal lounge areas, office accommodation for support staff and mobility storage areas.
- 1.7 The proposal meets the criteria under Policy H6 of the Local Plan which identifies the policy requirements for development supporting *“other specialist accommodation for vulnerable people”*.
- 1.8 The supporting text to the policy identifies at paragraph 4.4.52 that for *“many groups, accommodation that supports more independent living is required, rather than large new nursing homes. This may include extra-care housing, supported living and sheltered housing”*.
- 1.9 The proposed development incorporates a form of accommodation that enables occupants to live as independently as possible, particularly for older people and people with physical disabilities, whilst having opportunities for interaction with others and care support as required. As a result of the level of care provided, the accommodation proposed in this development falls into a C3 use class.
- 1.10 This Section considers the following:

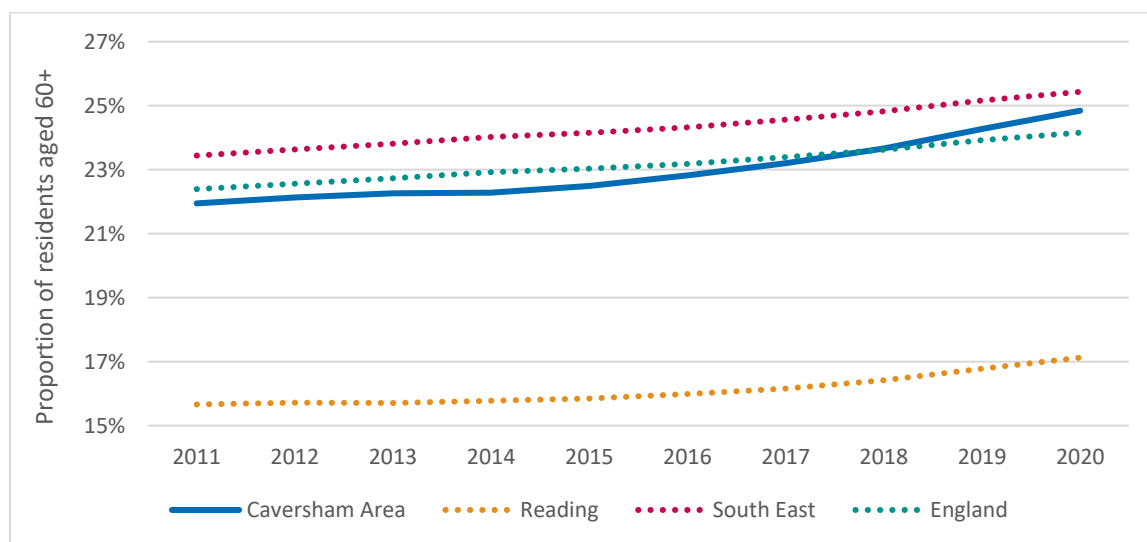
- The need for C3 (age restricted) accommodation; and
- Compliance of the proposal with Local Plan Policy H6 (Accommodation for vulnerable people).

The need for C3 (age-restricted) accommodation within the Borough

An ageing trend in the Caversham area

- 1.11 The proposed development at Henley Road, Caversham responds to an ageing trend that is intensifying throughout the Caversham area¹.
- 1.12 The area has seen its elderly population aged 60 and over increase by 7% in the past decade for which official data is currently available² (2011-20). This is matched only by the increase in the population aged between 45 and 59, which has also grown by 7% and will in time only lead to further growth in the older population as these residents continue to age. There has been a decline in those aged between 15 and 29 (-14%) and 30 and 44 (-27%) with an overall decline of 6% across the population as a whole since 2011.
- 1.13 Consequently, this means that the proportion of the overall population that are elderly has sharply risen at a faster rate than recorded across Reading, the South East or England. As a result, Caversham's elderly population now accounts for 25% of the area's total population, approaching the equivalent figure for the South East – having previously been much lower – and exceeding the figure recorded for England (24%). This alignment is particularly notable where Reading as a whole continues to have a much smaller elderly population, in proportionate terms.

Figure 1: Proportion of Residents Aged 60+



Source: ONS

- 1.2 The Local Plan does acknowledge the rapid ageing of the population in Reading and firmly expects the trend to continue, citing evidence from the 2016 Berkshire Strategic Housing Market

¹ The 'Caversham area' in this note comprises the amalgamated wards of Caversham, Mapledurham, Thames and Peppard within the borough of Reading.

² ONS (2021) Population estimates – small area based by single year of age, mid-2020

Assessment that the number of people in Reading aged over 65 is expected to increase by more than 60% to 2036.³ This is corroborated by the latest projections developed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which anticipate a 40% increase in the size of this population in Reading between 2018 and 2036, increasing to 51% in 2043.⁴

- 1.3 The Council rightly highlights how this ageing trend can be expected to generate ‘a range of housing needs over the coming years’, having noted ‘the fact that many people with existing needs are [currently] in poor or unsuitable accommodation’.⁵

An appropriate location

- 1.4 The Caversham area accommodated around 7,430 residents as of 2018⁶. One in four (25%) residents were aged 60 and over, which matches the comparable rates recorded in the region and country but exceeds that recorded in the borough as shown earlier and below. Only one ward in the borough had a larger proportion of its residents in this cohort, and only slightly so⁷. Significantly, some 10% of people living in the Caversham area were aged 75 and over, this again surpassing the rate recorded in all but one ward in the borough and rising from 8% in 2011 to emphasise the growing concentration of the older cohort in this location.

Table 2: Proportion of Residents Aged 60+ and 75+ (2020)

	Caversham Area	Reading borough	South East	England
Aged 60+	25%	17%	25%	24%
Aged 75+	10%	6%	9%	9%

Source: ONS

- 1.5 Given that elderly residents similarly accounted for a relatively large share of the overall population in 2011, it is unsurprising to find that a relatively large proportion of households in the Caversham area exclusively accommodated those aged 65 and over as of the 2011 Census, which continues to offer the most recent detailed local insight into individual living arrangements. Older people filled over a fifth of households in the area at this point, compared to 15% across the wider borough, 22% in the South East and 21% in England.

³ Reading Borough Council (2019) Reading Borough Local Plan, page 86

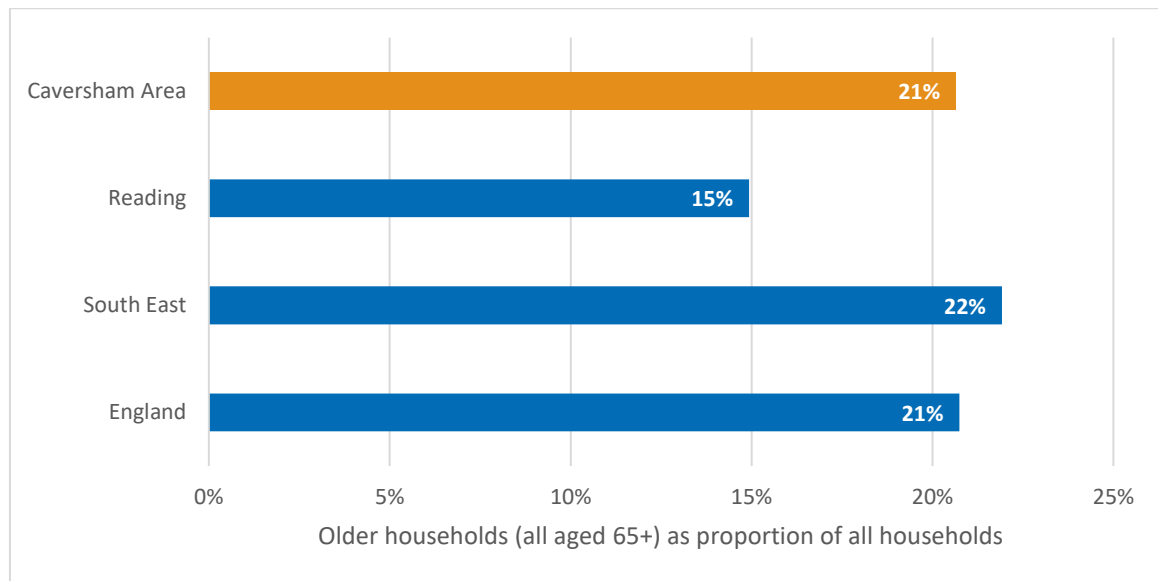
⁴ ONS (2020) Population projections – local authority based by single year of age.

⁵ Reading Borough Council (2019) Reading Borough Local Plan, page 86.

⁶ ONS (2021) Population estimates – small area based, 2020

⁷ Tilehurst (27% aged 60+)

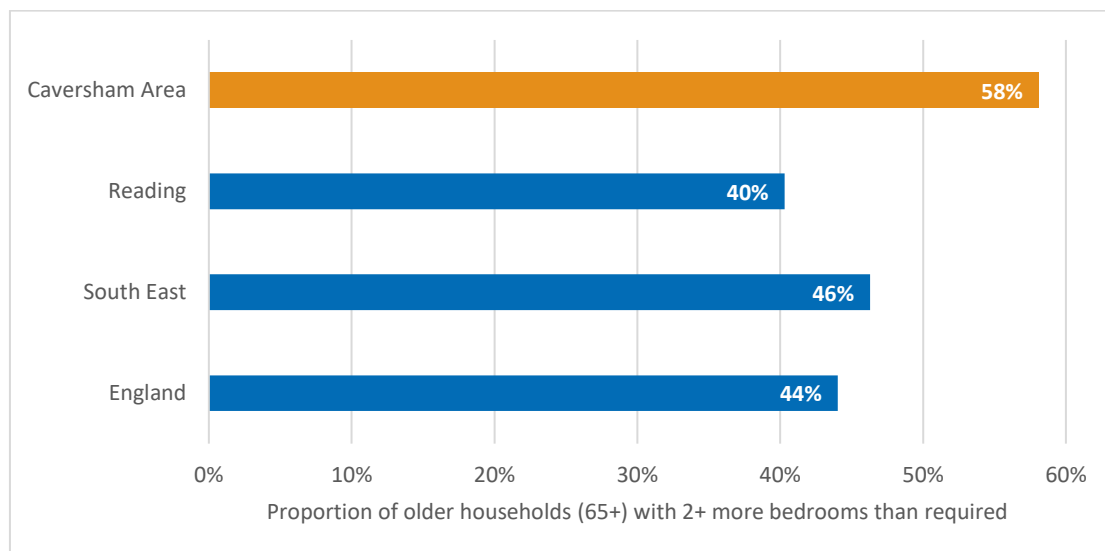
Figure 2: Comparing Representation of Older Households (2011)



Source: Census 2011

- 1.6 These households predominantly occupied larger homes, with well over half (58%) having at least two more bedrooms than they technically required based on the standard defined by the ONS. This is a substantially higher figure than recorded across the borough, region or country as a whole.

Figure 3: Older Households with 2+ More Bedrooms than Required (2011)



Source: Census 2011

- 1.7 This is not necessarily a desirable situation, because over one third (37%) of the elderly people living in such large homes in the Caversham area – and a comparable proportion in the wider borough (42%) – reported themselves to be limited to some extent in their daily activities.
- 1.8 The provision of specialist housing can help to prevent situations arising in which a growing number of elderly people have no choice but to live in homes that are too big and potentially

unmanageable, adversely impacting upon health and wellbeing⁸. It could also have the associated benefit of triggering movement in the local housing market, unlocking under-occupied larger housing for the 3,781 households throughout the borough – including 297 households in the Caversham area – that had fewer bedrooms than required as of 2011 and in turn vacating smaller more affordable housing for other households.

Summary

- 1.9 The proposed development of age-restricted housing at Henley Road clearly responds to a rapidly ageing demographic trend in the Caversham area, which is set to continue. This will require a positive planning approach to ensure an increasingly diverse range of housing options are provided, an issue which is recognised by the Council within its adopted Local Plan.
- 1.10 The Caversham area appears a suitable location for the provision of housing specifically aimed at older households, such as that offered by the proposed development, as it is at the forefront of this ageing trend. The wards in this part of the borough collectively have a significantly high proportion of residents in older age groups and a resultantly high share of households exclusively containing older people. These households predominantly occupy housing that is much larger than they require, despite evidence that some of those living in such homes have mobility issues. Specialist housing can both address this often undesirable situation and have a positive local impact on the housing market through the release of larger housing for other overcrowded households.

Policy H6 (Accommodation for Vulnerable People)

- 1.11 In light of the identified need for the proposed development, we assess the scheme provisions against the relevant requirements of Policy H6 below:

Policy Requirement	Compliance of the Proposal
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.	The proposal will deliver 59 apartments that are age-restricted to over 65's. The layout of the residential scheme allows for occupants to live as independently as possible, whilst incorporating facilities that encourage daily interaction, on-site support and accessibility.
Development will, where possible, locate accommodation close to, or incorporate, relevant community facilities, such as healthcare services, or day care for elderly people	The proposed development is located within Caversham and is located close to a number of bus stops along Henley Road. In addition, a number of facilities are within walking distance, including a pharmacy (800m/8minute walk), a dentist (1.2km/20 minute

⁸ Demos (2013) The Top of the Ladder, p9

	walk); and a GP Surgery (1.7km/22 minute walk).
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	As set out at paragraph 84 above, the proposed development meets an identified housing need within the Borough for sheltered accommodation.
Larger developments will include adequate provision for ambulance access	Appropriate access is provided.
Development will incorporate areas of green space, which are particularly important for many groups of vulnerable people	The proposed layout incorporates areas of open space.
Developments within residential areas will be designed to respect the residential character of their surroundings	The DAS explains the design approach.
Where a development required 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	Block A of the proposed development has been designed to reflect the design approach take to the neighbouring carehome. A series of proposed streetscenes have been provided. In addition, Block A steps down in terms of scale and massing to deliver an acceptable relationship with 215 Henley Road. The DAS demonstrates the design evolution and justification for the proposals. With regard to Block B, the scale and massing responds to the neighbouring carehome development and creates an acceptable relationship with the existing residential properties of 215,217 and 219 Henley Road.

- 1.14 In light of the above, it is considered the proposed development accords with the requirements of Local Plan Policy H6 (Accommodation for Vulnerable People).

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