
Open Space Statement

Former Dee Road Fire Station, Reading

July 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Open Space Statement has been prepared on behalf of Bellway Homes Limited (Thames Valley) and supports a planning application for the development of 63 homes, at the former Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Station, Dee Road, Reading ("the site").
- 1.2. The proposed development comprises:

Redevelopment of former fire station to provide 63 dwellings, including affordable housing, together with associated access, parking and landscaping.
- 1.3. The purpose of this statement is to identify and consider open space provision associated with the proposed development in the context of areas of existing open space adjoining the application, how they are to be managed in the future and how they can be enhanced or integrated into the proposal. This statement has been written with regard to the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).



2. Planning Policy Background

- 2.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that all planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this particular case the Development Plan comprises the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan and accompanying Proposals Map (November 2019). Other material considerations include guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework ('the NPPF'), updated in July 2021.
- 2.2. The following Reading Local Plan policies are relevant to the consideration of public open space provision for the proposed development:
- Policy EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space
 - Policy EN9: Provision of Open Space.
- 2.3. Policy EN7 confirms the areas of Local Green Space and Public Open Space in the Borough and confirms these areas will be protected from development.
- 2.4. Policy EN9 requires new development to make provision for appropriate open space based on the needs to the development, which can be achieved through on or off-site provision, contribution toward provision or improvement of existing leisure or recreational facilities. The policy confirms that on sites of 50 or more dwellings, new provision will be sought where the availability and quality of existing open space has been identified as deficient.
- 2.5. An Open Spaces Strategy for Reading was published in March 2007 and was amended by an Update Note in January 2018. The key objectives of the Open Spaces Strategy is to:
- *'Safeguard Reading's environmental endowment*
 - *Ensure that there is no net loss of recreational POS*
 - *Secure additional open space where opportunities arise.'*
- 2.6. The Strategy confirms that the amount of open space in Reading is adequate, but there are issues in regard to access, quality and green links to existing public open space.
- 2.7. NPPF Paragraph 98 states that access to a network of high quality open spaces is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for the nature and support efforts to address climate change.

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3. Proposed Development Open Space Considerations

- 3.1. The proposed development includes the provision of an area of open amenity space within the application site fronting onto Spey Road which is accessible for use by future occupiers and the existing local community.



Figure 1: Proposed Site Layout showing Open Amenity Space

- 3.2. The nearest areas of public open space to the application site, shown in Figure 2 are Local Green Spaces at:
- Lousehill Copse, a wooded area of green space, approximately 130m to the west (identified as Local green Space ref: EN7Wj in Local Plan Policy EN7) ; and
 - Prospect Park; a public park being one of Reading's main historic parks, approximately 350m to the south (identified as Local green Space ref: EN7Wo in Local Plan Policy EN7)



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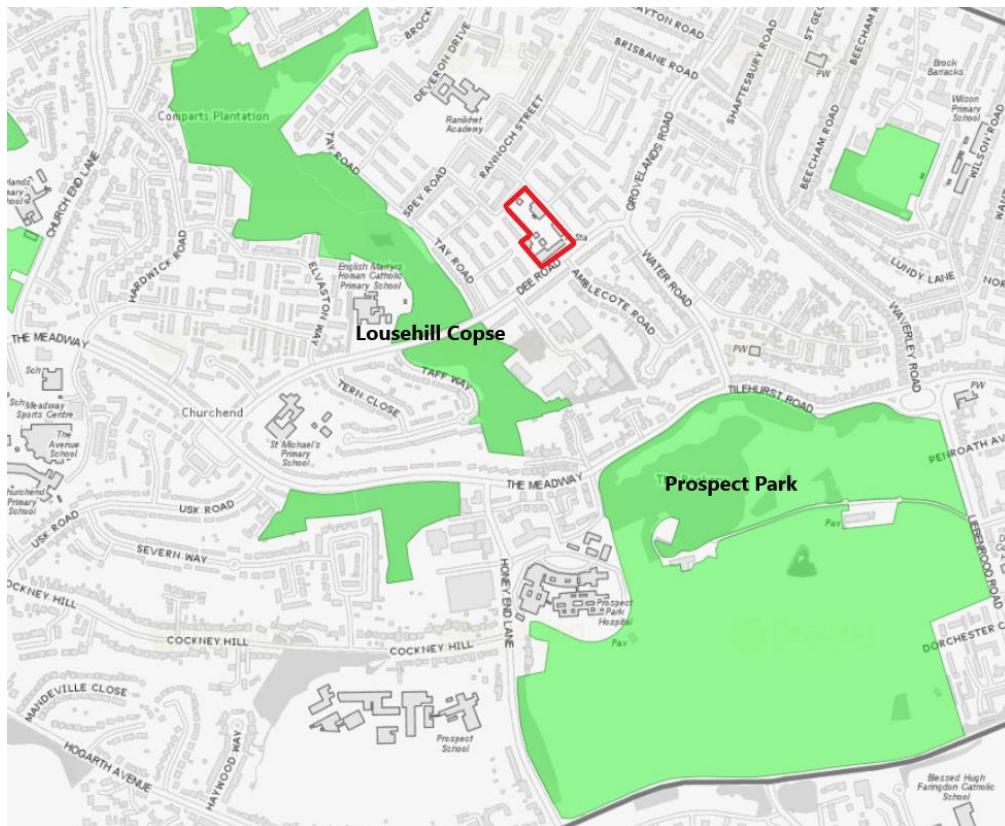


Figure 2: Local Green Space and Public Open Space

Section 106 Agreement

- 3.3. In accordance with Reading borough Council Planning Obligations under Section 106 Supplementary Planning Document, a contribution towards improving existing open space to cater for additional use resulting from the development would be appropriate.
- 3.4. Prospect Park and Lousehill Copse are identified as areas on open space in the vicinity of the site which future occupiers would likely use and an reasonable contribution towards improving these areas would be appropriate.
- 3.5. An obligation to make a financial contribution can be included any Section 106 agreement pursuant to the proposed development.



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4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The statement has identified Prospect Park and Lousehill Copse as areas of existing open space identified in the Reading Borough Council Local Plan that are in the vicinity of the application site that would be accessible to future occupiers of the proposed development.
- 4.2. It is considered that the proposed development could enhance the existing open space through off-site contributions via a S106 Agreement.
- 4.3. In addition, the proposed scheme includes landscaping provision and open space throughout the development, and in particular fronting Spey Road, to enhance the extent of planting and amenity space within the application site.
- 4.4. It is considered that the proposed on-site provision of open space, alongside the financial contribution for improving open space in the immediate vicinity of the site, would meet the requirement of the Local Plan in this regard.



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